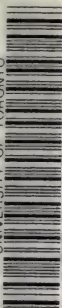


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1872. Aunt's presentation inscription

£1. 50

Give my love to Ethel, & Tell her I
follow her with every phase of kind
feeling w^h she is possibly desire.

To
Miss Lawson Barnes
with every good wish
from Thomas Dundas

Xmas
1905



JOHN TAMSON'S BAIRNS
AND OTHER POEMS.

KILMARNOCK :
DUNLOP & DRENNAN, PRINTERS.

JOHN TAMSON'S BAIRNS
AND OTHER POEMS

BY

THOMAS DUNLOP

Edinburgh

ANDREW ELLIOT, PRINCES STREET

1897

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IN MEMORY OF
MY FATHER AND MOTHER.

“ IN MY FATHER’S HOUSE.”

To Life’s low bourne they brought me—left me there ;
They entered in ; I linger on and wait
In shadow of the cold side of the gate ;
They were a Home to me beyond compare,
Sober, and blissful, and exceeding fair,
Tho’ stained with toil, and shorn of earthly state,
A House of God for me laid desolate,
Whose ruin’d walls, alas ! find no repair ;
But hope, on him who, leaving childhood’s years,
Learns to be not too wise, but filial more,
Bestows her smiles and intermingled tears, ,
And leads him to the Father’s open door,
Where things of God unshakable remain,
Whose fitful shadows erstwhile mock’d his pain.

CONTENTS.

JOHN TAMSON'S BAIRNS, - - - - -	1
THE DIAMOND JUBILEE, - - - - -	19
RETROSPECT, - - - - -	22
JOHN BULL AT HIS DEVOTIONS, 1896, - - -	24
THE CENTENARY OF LIFE—NOT DEATH—	
ROBERT BURNS, JULY 21ST, 1896, - - -	28
ROBIN REDIVIVUS—AN INTERVIEW WITH BURNS,	31
A TWA-HANDED CRACK IN HADES, - - - -	35
THE CRAIKIN' CRAW, - - - - -	38
THE AULD THORN TREE, - - - - -	42
THE WEE BURN, - - - - -	46
SYMPATHY, - - - - -	49
SOUTER WILLIE—AN EPISODE, - - - - -	50
SAIR HEART, - - - - -	57
FATHER'S OLD CLOCK, - - - - -	58
OURISK'S AWA', - - - - -	65
DISCONSOLATE, - - - - -	69
TRIUMPHANT, - - - - -	70
THE AULD WIFE AT THE WHEEL, - - - - -	72
MOEL FAMMA, - - - - -	74
GRANDFATHER'S FLUTE, - - - - -	75
LOVE AND WAR, - - - - -	76
A VISIT TO CRAIGENDUNTON, - - - - -	78
EPISTLE—IN CELEBRATION OF THE HALF-JUBILEE	
OF MINISTERIAL LIFE, - - - - -	80

OLD IMMORTALITY, - - - - -	87
THE ENDRICK, - - - - -	101
ODE—ADDRESS TO AN OLD SHOE, - - - - -	103
DID I DREAM? - - - - -	106
AN AUTUMNAL MONODY, - - - - -	108
JOHN HOWIE, LOCHGOIN, - - - - -	112
THE UNKNOWN, - - - - -	113
COMFORT FOR THE BEREAVED—IN MEMORY OF	
JOHN WEBSTER SMITH, - - - - -	114
FROM THE GREEK—PRIDE, - - - - -	115
FROM THE GREEK—ENVY, - - - - -	116
CHORUS, FROM EURIPIDES, - - - - -	118
AN AYRSHIRE TRAGEDY, - - - - -	121
IN MEMORIAM: W. P. PATON, - - - - -	123
AN OLD BALFRON WORTHY—MICHAEL ROBERT-	
SON, BANKER, - - - - -	124
DR. JOHN BROWN, - - - - -	128
GEORGE ELIOT, - - - - -	130
ALEXANDER MACLEOD, D.D., - - - - -	131
WILLIAM HOWIE WYLIE, - - - - -	132
ISAAC OLIVER JONES, - - - - -	133
I. O. J., - - - - -	135
BISHOP MOULE, - - - - -	136
WILLIAM PEDDIE, D.D., - - - - -	138
A FULL-GROWN MAN—IN MEMORIAM: REV. HUGH	
STOWELL BROWN, - - - - -	139
TOO LATE FOR MARTYRDOM: OR TOO SOON, - - - - -	140
SILVER WEDDING, - - - - -	141
IN WEST KILBRIDE U.P. CHURCH, - - - - -	142
A THOUGHT OF SYMPATHY, - - - - -	145

CONTENTS.

ix.

BREEZE HILL, BOOTLE, - - - - -	146
RETROSPECT, - - - - -	156
A REMINISCENCE OF CONTINENTAL TRAVEL, -	157
A BIRTHDAY ODE, - - - - -	161
MEMORABILIA ROMANA :	
THE COLOSSEUM, - - - - -	162
THE MAMERTINE PRISON, - - - - -	163
THE EUCALYPTUS, - - - - -	164
THE CATACOMBS AND ST. PETER'S, - - -	164
THE PANTHEON, - - - - -	165
THE CARICATURE, - - - - -	166
THE CRUCIFIXION, - - - - -	166
THE COMMUNION, - - - - -	167
THE PILGRIMS, - - - - -	168
AT SHELLEY'S GRAVE, - - - - -	168
AT KEATS'S GRAVE, - - - - -	179
PROVIDENCE, - - - - -	170
A MEMORABLE DAY, - - - - -	172
THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS — A ROADSIDE	
ROMANCE, - - - - -	173
MY FRIEND. MY RESTING-PLACE, - - - - -	174
AT WORDSWORTH'S GRAVE, - - - - -	175
A BIRTHDAY IDYL, - - - - -	176
A BIRTHDAY OFFERING, - - - - -	177
TEMPUS FUGIT, - - - - -	178
A NEW-YEAR MEDITATION, - - - - -	179
AULD YEAR AND NEW, - - - - -	180
BEN HARDY'S BAIRN, - - - - -	182
LITTLE NELLY NOBODY, - - - - -	195
TODDLIN' TAMMIE, - - - - -	203

GAVIN'S BIRTHDAY, - - - - -	206
INNOCENCE, - - - - -	210
A GOOD FIGHTER, - - - - -	211
A MAN OF WEIGHT, - - - - -	212
MOTHERHOOD, - - - - -	213
BE STILL, - - - - -	215
VICTORY, - - - - -	216
A REVERIE OF THE BEREAVED, - - - - -	218
HOME-GOING, - - - - -	220
THE GRACES, - - - - -	222
A CHILD'S PRAYER, - - - - -	224
A VISION OF FINAL JUDGMENT, - - - - -	227
EPHPHATHA, - - - - -	229
THE VICTORY OF LOVE, - - - - -	231
SONG OF THE HEBREW MAID, - - - - -	234
THE SUNBEAM, - - - - -	237
MAJORITY, - - - - -	239
FAINTHEARTED, - - - - -	240
WISDOM FROM BELOW, - - - - -	242
WAR, - - - - -	245
THE FLOWERS, AND WHAT THE FLOWERS BEAR	
WITNESS TO, - - - - -	246
HYMN OF DEDICATION, - - - - -	252
LUX IN TENEBRIS, - - - - -	257
"I WILL NOT LET THEE GO," - - - - -	258
PATIENCE, - - - - -	260
THE WILDERNESS MADE GLAD, - - - - -	262
THE MYSTERY OF MYSTERIES, - - - - -	263
MISERERE ! - - - - -	265
NIGHTFALL, - - - - -	267

xi.

DAYBREAK,	-	-	-	-	-	-	269
GRACE,	-	-	-	-	-	-	271
AT THE CHURCH DOOR—ENTERING,						-	272
AT THE CHURCH DOOR—LEAVING,					-	-	273
AT THE THRESHOLD,		-	-	-	-	-	274
AT THE COMMUNION,		-	-	-	-	-	276
PROPHECY,	-	-	-	-	-	-	278
TRANSFIGURED,		-	-	-	-	-	279
PRESENT NEEDS AND PATRIARCHAL MEMORIES,							282
DIVINE SERVICE,		-	-	-	-	-	284
SALVATION FOR THE SAVIOUR,					-	-	288
THE SMOKING FLAX,		-	-	-	-	-	290
LOVE'S ONLY CHOICE,		-	-	-	-	-	292
ALLELUIA,		-	-	-	-	-	294
A LYRIC OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY,					-	-	296
THE SECRET OF STRENGTH,				-	-	-	298
A LADY'S ADDRESS,	-	-	-	-		-	290

JOHN TAMSON'S BAIRNS.

DEDICATION.

*To Her who of her palaces hath made
A Home wherein the lowly Christ might dwell ;
And oft, in simple guise, beneath the shade
Of cottage roof hath found, and loved it well,
A palace richer than her own, arrayed
With heavenly peace and joy unspeakable—
To Her would I, far off, on bended knees,
Devotion's unskill'd offering, offer these.*

I.

Edenic Toil ! who would not hope to share
Thy silken yoke and uncomplaining breast ?
No groan from lungs of brass then vex'd the air,
Nor beads of grime dropt from the brow oppress'd,
Mingling with bread of tears, life's daily fare,—
More sweet thy labour was than is our rest
When in the calm of Sabbath morn embower'd,
And with the breath of dewy roses dower'd.

II.

John Tamson dwelt in Eden ;—not that place
Where no sharp weeds bestrewed the velvet floor ;
Where never taint of sorrow marr'd the face ;
Nor cripple vagrant limped from door to door ;
Nor mossy fields were stoned in deep disgrace ;
Nor naked feet by frosts were bitten sore ;
It stood—still stands—apart from Scripture story,
Somewhere not far from Fife, or Tobermory.

III.

On lawful days a cobbler's craft he plied
At open door, close by the babbling street ;
With cunning art well-spent on brutish hide
He gave heroic help to human feet,—
Thence well prepared, whatever might betide,
To wade thro' bloody fields, or blustering sleet,
To tread the snow-drift, leap the moorland hag,
Or tempt the frowning brows of mountain crag.

IV.

He was not old, but he had crossed the line
Which bounds the middle stream from farther shore ;
Neighbours could see his "croon" begin to shine,
And how the sable hair was tinged with hoar ;
He thumped his knee, and rax'd the resinous twine
(Himself well knew) less bravely than before ;
And oft would pause and gaze on passers-by
With weary, wistful, unperceiving eye.

V.

Yet was he blessed sevenfold in gentle wife,
Of stature small, but with enshrined soul
Just large enough to grace a lowly life,
And clasp the earth in love from pole to pole ;—
If Thought means Power and tears can hinder strife,
Kings felt but did not know her sweet control ;
Not less from cottage than Cathedral chair
God hears the wrestling spirit's inwrought prayer.

VI.

These two were mated years past three times ten,
Each to the other's changeless full content ;
Blithesome they took their little " but and ben,"
And there in frugal peace their days were spent,
Near by the echoing murmurs of the glen
Where once their lover's troth to heaven was sent,
And carrier angels came with glad accord
To bless their honest toil, their bed and board.

VII.

Humble their cares and small their household stock,
Simple and few, yet of substantial kind,—
Plain dresser, chest of drawers, the eight-day clock,
Meal-kist and bookcase, food for frame and mind ;
Cupboard of curious wares, a dainty flock
That shyly peep'd from crystal doors behind ;
Cat and canary—cage with muslin frill ;
Flower-pot with moss-rose on the window-sill.

VIII.

The Bible foremost, undisputed lord,
To whom all else paid reverential due ;
Not least, a rusty basket-hilted sword
Which some brave hand for God and Covenant drew ;
Next, the broad stool whereon the cobbler bored
And beat the pliant leather old and new ;—
And rocking-cradle, that need rock no more,
Not in dishonour laid behind the door.

IX.

Within a score of summers, one by one
Nine bairns had come to fill that downy nest ;
Three died ere yet their infant days had run ;
One at the Cape, two dwelt in the Far West ;
A maid who saw her bridal year begun
Had kirkyard gowan's growing on her breast
Before it closed ; a sailor lad was drown'd ;
Another lost and searched for—never found.

X.

In Israel's palmy age no godly seed
Was ever rear'd with holier fear than they ;
Was earlier taught that God was God indeed,
Guardian of human frailty night and day,
Whence they might look for help in time of need,
Whom only serve, on whom alone might stay ;
And when the righteous cause was in the field
Might staunchly die, but neither spare nor yield.

XI.

The Sabbath came, for pleasure not their own ;
Benignant angel from Jehovah sent,
To salve the eyes, and move the heart of stone
With thankfulness, and love, and pure intent ;
That seed of life might not in vain be sown,—
So to their Hill of Zion forth they went
In clean attire, and of the little band
Not one drew near to God with empty hand.

XII.

Not one sat listless in the House of Prayer,
The high-back'd pew, familiar family nook ;
Mother, well-pleased, would smooth her lambkin's hair,
And scent the fragrant leaf that mark'd her book ;
Nor would the boys, from love and reverence, dare
To tempt the solemn father's side-long look ;
God spake, and all alike felt wholesome dread
What might befall to callous heart or head.

XIII.

Incense more free and holier still would rise
When John and she, the priestess of the hearth,
Each day renewed their fireside sacrifice,
And worshipp'd God with mingling fear and mirth ;—
Like Jacob's ladder lifted to the skies,
So did the aspiring soul surmount the earth,
To drink unspoken joy at heavenly springs
Amid sweet odours waft by angels' wings.

XIV.

The floor swept clean, as tho' for Christ's own feet ;
No sloven attitude, nor thing mislaid ;
Each child well knew, with face most gravely sweet,
The very fly, if buzzing noise it made,
Would be rebuked when father took his seat
And took the Book, and sang, and read, and prayed ;
And so God's blessing caught them on their knees—
How strong the nation built of homes like these !

XV.

Alas ! this pious home was vacant now
Of chattering voices and of children's cares ;
A silent sadness on the cobbler's brow
Long since had settled almost unawares.
Most kind was she who shared his nuptial vow
And proud parental joy that once was theirs ;
But love will sooner stay the sunset sheen
Than brighten hope with bloom that might have been.

XVI.

At eve one day of wet and wintry breeze
John sat demurely at the Book and read
"Whoso shall give to drink to one of these ;"
Just then a bairnly voice broke in and said,
"Help a puir wean the nicht, mem, if you please ;"
The pleading of a beggar boy for bread.
He tried the latch, by rarest chance not fast,
Peep'd in, his eyes with recent tears o'er cast.

XVII.

Up rose the cobbler's wife, his gentle Ann,
Took in the boy and said, "What brings ye here
In sic a nicht sae late, my puir wee man?"
"My mither's dead," said he with gathering tear;
"I'm cauld and hungry and my name is Dan;
My mither's dead and gane this mony a year."
"But wha's your faither,—you're no left your lane?"
"My faither, mem! oh, please, I ne'er had nane."

XVIII.

"Nae faither!" and she eyed the little elf,
The while her bosom heaved with strange desire.
With a shrewd glance at John, her other self,
She set the boy to dry before the fire,
Syne rax'd a barley bannock from the shelf;
"Hae, lad, nae better does a king require;"
So whilst the lad consumed this kingly fare
They spent the interrupted hour of prayer.

XIX.

Oh, saddest in a child! a worn, sad face
Had Dan, but haply nothing to forbid;
No infant crimes had there their nursing-place,
Nor crafty glance was lurking 'neath the lid;
His very rags had tongues to plead his case
In such a home as this—and so they did.
John's voice groan'd deep, with burden'd soul oppress'd:
"God of the fatherless, Thou knowest best!"

XX.

The Book laid by, the cobbler then began
To ask him whose he was and whence he came ;
But this did sore perplex our little man—
He did not know, and he was not to blame.
His memory could reach no further than
A place beyond the sea he called his hame—
A darling mother who had clasped him there,
Patted his dimpled cheek and stroked his hair.

XXI.

That night, with no begrudging hand, they spread
A woolly couch for weary Dan to sleep ;
Kind sleep ! the poor man's Paradise!—his bed
Of roses balmed with slumbers soft and deep,
Where thorn is not, where never tear is shed—
The gate whereat so many wail and weep ;
But few of all the jewelled throng pass in
To ease them of their pleasures and their sin.

XXII.

Ye who by honest labour win your crust,
And ye who beg it (now more seldom found
Honest as well), because, alas ! ye must,—
Know that your brows with golden peace are crown'd,
Whilst Kings are bare, tho' cringing in the dust—
For you, sweet rills of sleep-provoking sound
Flow evermore in Nature's vale of rest,
And rise the dreamless mansions of the blest.

XXIII.

Dan dropt asleep ; beside him lingered long
The woman's wakeful eye and brooding heart ;
His tartan breeks had suffer'd fearful wrong ;
No good Samaritan the healing art
Applied more deft to make the feeble strong
Than she, with thread and needle, did her part
For that dear Master whom her task might please :
It may be done, thought she, to "one of these."

XXIV.

Beneath His guiding hand she clipped and sewed,
Her house His home, her toil a sacrament ;
The Christ had come into her mean abode—
It was His garment's hem o'er which she bent,
And by the touch a healing virtue flowed,
A saving health to heart and finger sent ;
And through her spirit swept such wondrous thrill
As High Priest yearly felt on Zion's hill.

XXV.

By chance, some shred of crumpled paper tell ;
She looked, and turned away, and looked again ;
What might it be, how dropp'd she could not tell ;
A while it lay, she eyed it now and then ;
At last she took it up and searched it well,—
A printed leaf, and scratched with ink and pen ;
And lo ! some hair within the inmost fold,
Two tiny locks, one black, and one like gold.

XXVI.

She gazed on these and on the slumbering child,—
A stony gaze, as tho' her soul had fled ;
A long time gazed, whilst many a fancy wild
Flew far and near, with living folk and dead ;
She frowned, she sighed, she all but wept, she smiled,
A sudden start, she rose, and reached the bed
Where John a good hour since had lain and slept,—
She had a secret that might not be kept.

XXVII.

He woke ; he took the relics in his hand ;
Viewed them with care, with wonderment not less
Than she ; anon the printed leaf he scann'd ;
'Twas from the Bible, nor unlike the dress
That had concealed it, tatter'd, worn, and tann'd,—
What might it mean, not he nor she could guess,
But words of God scarce absent from his mind
One waking hour, were there, and underlined.

XXVIII.

" I waited,"—long had served this patient man,
Motto whereby he toiled, and hoped, and thrived ;
Thro' all his loss and lingering griefs it ran,
From Holy Writ and jubilant Psalm derived,
Whence courage comes to hands that nothing can,
And strength to hearts of every hope deprived ;—
The words were these : " I waited patiently,
And He to me inclined and heard my cry."

XXIX.

Swift as the clans by chieftain's clarion wake;
As fluttering wings by crack of huntsman's gun ;
As when a stone disturbs the placid lake ;
As rippling songsters greet the rising sun,—
So did old echoes of remembrance break
On John afresh, with gladness full, or none,
When by the sacred word which marked this leaf
Past years rushed back ; and one bright day in chief :

XXX.

It was the day when Rab, his youngest child,
A clever lad, well-grown, sweet-natured, good,
And wise, left home, and every prospect smiled ;—
There was a spot within a wayside wood
Where sire and son the parting hour beguiled
With blessings hardly breathed but understood ;
Their words were few, that sacred word the last,—
Rab wept, and vowed that he would hold it fast.

XXXI.

So parted they ; and many a look behind
Each to the other gave, till lost to view ;—
Ah me ! the frequent letters soon declined ;
They could but murmur there was nothing new ;
And then the lad slipp'd off where none could find ;
The old folks' joys thereafter had been few,
Save in the grace that by the Saviour's Cross
Might still prove more than victor over loss.

XXXII.

'Twas so this night ; they both with chastened heart
Quite melted o'er the old familiar name ;
Their heads had long the grey that griefs impart,
And now the cheek anew was flush'd with shame ;
What crime can make a mother's love depart ?
"Puir Rab," said Ann, "he should hae stayed at
hame."
"We'll wait," quoth John, "we'll trust the laddie's vow ;
We kenna what God's will may bring, nor how."

XXXIII.

Faith sowed the seed, and Hope went forth to reap
Harvests of joy from the well-watered lands :
But when she saw "wild oats" instead of wheat
She strewed her head with dust and wrung her hands ;
So did old Jacob leave, with fretful feet,
The promised soil, and tread the alien sands,
Nor knew nor hoped his father's God would save
His hoary head from an unhallowed grave.

XXXIV.

Now when the kindly tear had soothed her grief
Ann laid, with one more look, the slips of hair,
As on God's breast, within that guardian leaf ;
She had a secret drawer, she laid it there ;
She turned to Dan : "Gude kens thou art nae thief ;
And in His ain braw time He'll mak' it bare."
"We've seen young hearts," quoth John, "made hard
as airn."
"We'll dae our best, guidman—we'll keep the bairn !"

XXXV.

And at the cobbler's hearth from day to day
This poor lost lamb was folded, nursed, and fed ;
Ofttimes the minister was heard to say
He was a wondrous boy for heart and head ;
And when the "master" pursed his quarter's pay,
"That lad will be a bishop yet," he said ;
Ann too that vision had which brightest gleams
In every Scottish peasant's pious dreams.

XXXVI.

Ten times has Winter made the beech tree bare
Whose stalwart form beside her cottage stood ;
Ten times the throstle's young high-nested there
Have raised their clamorous heads and gaped for food ;
The kirk-bell rings, and to the House of Prayer
Eden ascends devoutly, as it should ;
The bell has ceased ; the preacher takes his place ;
An anxious awe broods in his pale young face.

XXXVII.

It was our Dan ; and many strangers drew
To hear his first "discoorse" for many a mile ;
Among the rest, more obvious to the view,
A kilted soldier strode along the aisle ;
He sat him down in the old cobbler's pew,
And in the good man's face he gazed awhile ;
But at the wee auld wife—for she was there—
A glance he threw as tho' he hardly dare.

XXXVIII.

"I waited" was the text ; when he began
The preacher trembled, but he soon grew bold ;
He spoke of hope in trickling rills that ran
Thro' seer and psalmist in the days of old ;
How patient Mercy waits on guilty man ;
How Grace can bring the lost sheep to the fold ;
And home, long desolate, rings with joyful sound :
"My son was dead—was lost, and now is found !"

XXXIX.

In stillness rapt and reverential fear
They heard ; they gazed ; they saw his visage glow ;
Spell-bound, entranced ; they felt that Presence near
Who treads unseen the sacred courts below,
And salveth unused eyelids with the tear
Of saintly joy or penitential woe ;
Thankful, they drew a deep breath at the close ;
Then, with the unction of his blessing, rose.

XL.

When now the murmuring throngs retook their way,
And spoke in solemn speech their soul's delight,
The stranger said, "Gudeman, you aiblins may
Give an old soldier quarters for the night ;
I hoped to rest at home this Sabbath-day—
The road was long, nor is my burden light."
"My cot is there," said John, "and nane e'er saw
The puir man or the stranger turned awa'."

XLI.

In twilight's lone sad hour he breathed the story
That marr'd his fair young life with rueful strains ;
And how he fought for Britain's gain or glory
The turban'd tribes on Indian hills and plains ;
What years had pass'd, unsmiling years and gory,
Since first he followed to the bagpipe strains ;
How often Scotia's onset swept the field,
And Sikh and Afghan like the drunkard reel'd.

XLII.

"But War's wild din," he cried, "to me was less
Than Love's deep woes, for I had woo'd and wed—
My wife ! my child ! whom, if he lives, Heaven bless !
We parted—met no more—I fought, I bled—
They knew not mine, nor I knew their distress ;
I was a captive long—they thought me dead—
God help ! whose comfort is where needed most—
The mother pined and died—the child was lost !"

XLIII.

"The preacher's text 'I waited,'" murmured John ;
"Tis in my heart," the soldier cried, "not here ;"
He showed his Bible where the leaf had gone ;
Told how his wife once gave, for parting cheer,
Two locks—like jet, like yellow gold they shone—
Her own hair and the child's ; he held them dear,
Dear as the Scripture page he loved the best ;
Enfolded there, she sewed them to his vest.

XLIV.

He bore them far, thro' many fields of strife ;
He lay a-dying long, nor knew what pass'd,
Nor where the trifles treasured more than life ;
And when from death-like wounds he woke at last—
But now, ere he had ceased, the cobbler's wife
Drew from the secret place which held them fast
The leaf, the tufts of hair with silk entwin'd—
He looked, he stared on them like one stone-blind.

XLV.

She told how in his rags the little man
Had brought them, as it seemed, across the sea ;
"Your bairnie's name?" she asked him ; "was it Dan?"
To's feet he sprang and cried, "'Twas he! 'twas he!"
While down his hardy cheek the tear-drop ran ;
Living or dead, where might his darling be,
Thrice in one breath he pled with them to say.
"Patience," quoth John, "you heard him preach
to-day."

XLVI.

Then Dan, for he was there and heard it all,
Flew to his father's heart and firm embrace ;
And oh ! how sweetly then did love recall
The sainted mother in the youth's pale face !
She knew that God, should hapless times befall,
Would lead the shorn lamb to a sheltered place ;
The vest, torn from her soldier's wounded side,
She found it, shaped it for his child—and died.

XLVII.

She died, nor did her last hope seem to fail ;
One friend—for friends not absent were, tho' few—
A kindly captain, heard the orphan's tale ;
He thought the father's kindred once he knew
Whither his good ship soon was bound to sail.
The ship went down, the home port full in view,
And he, the surly billows long had braved,
Was lost. His charge, the orphan child, was saved.

XLVIII.

And in that town, washed by the salt sea spray,
The little stranger, friendless and alone,
A vagrant woman kept in such rude way
As might by loose sobriety be shown ;
From scanty store in wallet day by day
His bread she doled, who mostly begged her own.
Poor wastrel boy ! half-homeless, till at last
Blown to the cobbler's hearth by God's rough blast.

XLIX.

Then said the stranger to the aged pair :
"Our God is just, and wonders He hath done ;
The curse I brought, by His decree I bare ;
My sins of youth have found me one by one ;
And now prevails the long parental prayer—
My name is Rab, and I was once your son."
He tried, and tried again, but could no more ;
Love could but speak with tears at Mercy's door.

L.

It might not be in human words to tell
The love that overflowed and would not cease ;
Ann's joy ran from her eyelids like a well,
Crime could not crush, but made her love increase ;
And when at worship on their knees they fell,
"Fain would I now," cried John, "depart in peace!
Wait on the Lord ! I waited patiently,
And He to me inclined, and heard my cry !"

LI.

Not far had they, thro' mists of coming years,
This aged Simeon and his spouse, to go ;—
In that still place where Love her tribute rears
To souls above and slumbering dust below,
Two often stand, and in their tranquil tears
The lingering rays of sunset sweetly glow ;
Then drooping Night, and to their lifted eyes,
The jewell'd gates of opening Paradise !

THE DIAMOND JUBILEE.

I.

Our noble Queen !
 Gentle and true
 Lady, whose sceptred hand
 Waves over sea and land ;
 None worthier to command
 The race of Man e'er knew ;
 Nor Fame's keen eye hath seen
 A happier lot betide
 Monarch, more loved, more tried
 Than thou, our Empire's pride—
 Our Queen !

II.

Our noble Queen !
 In maidenhood
 Sweetest and tenderest,
 Truth-girt and Beauty-drest,
 Brightest among the best
 Where all were pure and good,
 The tire of circling sheen
 Came to bedeck thy brow,
 Illustrious then, but now
 Its rarest jewel thou—
 Our Queen

III.

Our noble Queen !
Full sixty years
Since then their work have done ;
Countless the triumphs won ;
Thy regal task, begun
With trembling and with tears,
Nobly achieved hath been ;—
Hail ! Diamond Jubilee !
God of the brave and free
Still bless and prosper thee—
Our Queen !

IV.

Our noble Queen !
High, humble, wise,
Great-soul'd amongst the great ;
The right Hand of the State ;
At many a cottage-gate
Bending to sympathise ;
A sister to the mean
On Grief's low sanded floor,
Wafted from shore to shore
The woman's heart she bore—
Our Queen !

V.

Our noble Queen !
From East and West,
What symphonies are these
Borne on Atlantic breeze,
From Australasian seas,

From Himalayan crest,
From Tropic islands green,
Indian and Afric plains,—
Strong-voiced Imperial strains—
Belov'd, she lives, she reigns—
Our Queen !

VI.

Our noble Queen !
With one accord
The far-off lands make haste
Over the billowy waste,
With welcome greetings graced !
Men of the pen and sword,
Of high or humble mien ;
All Arts their tribute send ;
Hard Toil, high Thought attend—
Their sovereign and their friend—
Our Queen !

VII.

Our noble Queen !
In noble deeds
Would we embalm her name,—
That flowers of sweetest fame,
Outvie'd, might sink for shame
And rank with merest weeds ;—
Our God, on whom we lean !
Till endless years have flown
Bright be the spotless throne,
And she still proudly known—
Our Queen !

RETROSPECT.

That day will no proud heart forget
 Who saw it rise and set ;
 Clear dawn, bright noon, and blissful eve
 So loth to take her leave ;
 The sky, the cloud, the sun's warm ray,
 Themselves kept holiday ;
 Her regal bounty Nature sent
 In every element,
 To bless with unexampled smiles
 Our gay green-mantled isles ;
 June's loveliest waving on the trees,
 Her sweetest in the breeze ;
 One voice, one mighty song it bore,
 Swelling from shore to shore ;
 One prayer laid at the Throne unseen :
 God save our gracious Queen !

Herself to the high Temple came
 In her great Sovereign's name,
 To own the ever-during Sway ;
 Her humble thanks to pay.

On, on thro' the tumultuous roar
 Which million voices pour ;
 Amid the dinsome trumpet's blare ;
 Girt by the brave and fair ;
 Led by the pride of prancing steeds
 In Honour's antique weeds ;

With tramp of men whose feet had trod
 Antipodean sod,
Cape veldt, the swamps where Niger flows,
 Hot plains and Indian snows ;
Sons whom Canadian forests knew,
 Foremost amongst the true ;
Homage by every kindred paid,
 Of every sunburnt shade ;—
On, on she came with joyous peal,
 Thro' serried ranks of steel.

Soft jewell'd hands, wave after wave,
 Their myriad greeting gave ;
The brighter flash from fair eyes given,
 Like stars new-dropt from heaven ;
And those that wept whilst looking on
 With mellowed lustre shone.

She, welcome rest for every eye,
 Her own could not keep dry ;—
Not now, when at His Temple gate
 She and her people wait,—
Praise rising to the King of Kings
 On far out-spreading wings.

Then had the sacred moment come ;
 The murmuring hosts were dumb ;
Stillness divine that moment reigned—
 Held every soul enchained ;

The head bowed down, the drooping eyes,
 Witnessed her sacrifice ;
 Thanks offered to the Sovereign Good,—
 An Empire's gratitude ;
 The solemn vow, the meek request,
 In her, for all the rest :
Thee, Lord of Love, Thy subjects bless,—
Thou King of Righteousness !
Long as Thou reignest Prince of Peace,
Our power thro' Thine increase !

JOHN BULL AT HIS DEVOTIONS, 1896.

I. From the Continental point of view.

Great Being, with supernal powers
 More just and loftier still than ours,
 Afar from Thy rose-mantled towers,
 See'st Thou what's passin',
 Where 'neath the waning crescent cowers
 " The Great Assassin ? "

For that most fit and gruesome name
 We give him thanks who shares Thy claim,
 And humbly owns Thy greater fame,
 Our sainted Will'em ;—
 For slaughtered hosts, what hellish blame
 When we don't kill 'em !

Badger the Turk ! heed not his cries !
 The meek Armenian bombs baptise,

Soft-swaddling them with Christian lies
As with a garment,—
Should he the crafty Greek despise,
Root out the varmint !

Once on a day, we must confess,
We clasp'd our Turk with fond caress ;
In his behoof we bore the stress
So grim and gory ;
The butchery done, as Thou might'st guess,
For England's glory !

Hang me this European pottle
Of heads, save ours, not worth a dottle,
Where each his neighbour fain would throttle,
Tho' sweet as honey !
Give John his Bible and his bottle,
And shoals of money !

With leave all else on earth to trample,
He shall Thee praise both loud and ample,
And lend Thee many a swatch and sample
Out of his stores,—
If Thou but let him rowte and rample
Like beast on fours !

Hear how Thy slumbering Zion wakes,
While shepherds ply their crooked stakes !
Thy chosen flock such bleating makes—
Hast Thou not felt it ?
The heart no high-swung hammer breaks,
This plaint would melt it !

Make Russ and German fight and tumble ;
Heed not the fiery Frenchman's grumble ;
Let "Cock-a-doodle" funk and fumble,
Our Yankee brothers,—
We are Thy people, meek and humble,
Confound all others !

II. From the Patriotic point of view.

Oh Thou, to whom our thanks we raise,
More worthy than our worthiest praise,
Whose hand upholds the heavens, and sways
Their dark mutations,—
Whom the whole suppliant world obeys,
Thou God of Nations !

Gird us with Truth ; our souls beguile
From every motive mean and vile ;
Bless with the sunbeams of Thy smile,
In mercy shed ;
Let the proud waves that guard our isle
Still keep Thy tread !

Our hearts with love, our homes with peace,
Our stores with righteousness increase,
Our haggard poor bless with release
From want and grime ;
The scowl of Discontentment cease,
And rankling Crime !

Let lowly Worth, unshackled now,
Lift unabashed her modest brow,—

Let Freedom, loos'd from Mammon's vow,
And sordid Ease,
Drive thro', with keen industrial plough,
Waste lands and seas !

Guide Thou our guardians of the State ;
Thy fear within our Temples wait ;
With the pure aims that scoffers hate
Our Press empower ;
And should we perish—make us great
In Ruin's hour !

Oh ! keep us blameless in Thy sight ;
Clothe us with honour and with might ;
Quick to relieve and slow to smite,
The wide world o'er—
A safeguard and a beacon light
From shore to shore !

Our nation be the Friend in Need
When tyrants rage and subjects bleed,
For all who suffer by the greed
Of lust or gold—
A Good Samaritan indeed,
Like him of old !

From civil strife defend our sod ;
Never by foreign foe be trod ;
Our armour Thine, our feet well shod
With peace always ;
Our bulwark still the Book of God,
As in past days !

THE CENTENARY OF LIFE—NOT DEATH.

ROBERT BURNS, JULY 21ST, 1896.

I.

Not thine, beloved Minstrel ! foremost, best
 Of all whom Love holds captive at her feet,
 Nor ours, the doleful mood, when thee we meet
 Where once thy mortal woes were laid to rest ;—
 With smiles we greet thee, a perennial guest
 In pure Affection's most familiar seat,
 Mellifluent Burns ! Yet not too sweetly sweet,
 Not over-coy thy Muse, nor over-dress'd ;—
 With smiles, with evermore transcendent mirth,
 Thee, happy Bard ! most fortunate of men,
 On this proud day that hail'd thy better birth,
 Unnumber'd souls whom thou hast charm'd since then
 And all those hundred years, a choral throng,
 Sing whilst they share thy heritage of song !

II.

I who, long since, and in my native air,
 While yet a child, thy witching wood-notes found ;
 Whose sires beside thee toil'd and till'd the ground,
 And children to their children would declare
What bursts of human joy when Burns was there,
 As at the evening hearth we gathered round,
 Or where the loom shot forth its clattering sound,—
 No breast so cold but would the rapture share,—
 I knew thou would'st not scorn the little rill

With moist kiss making glad the moorland heath ;
 Nor would "wee modest flower" with crimson frill,
 Thought I, be absent from thy floral wreath ;
 So this poor reed its tribute too would raise
 While great ones yield their trumpet-blasts of praise !

III.

None else but thee could win the world's great heart ;
 Not Homer, nor the polished Mantuan swain ;
 Nor he who tuned his lyre to endless pain ;
 Nor high surmounting Shakespeare far apart ;
 Nor mighty organ-peal of Milton's art ;
 Nor those Lake-showers of soul-refreshing rain,
 Sir Galahad, and all his silken train
 Of lady-lords : in college, kirk, and mart
 Thee have they crowned the worthiest of men
 To draw all hearts as tho' they were but one ;—
 Like some frank maid in dewy hawthorn glen,
 So shall the world, while countless ages run,
 Clasp thee with fonder arms—not asking why—
 With ever-smiling cheek and tearful eye.

IV.

Thy song a Benediction breathed on men
 Who dare do right, and dare not but be free,—
 That man to human-kind might human be ;
 Might spare the "timorous beastie's" lowly den,
 And strike with truth-anointed sword or pen
 Tyrant and rogue of mean or high degree,
 And crook-knee'd hypocrite ; oh ! but for thee,

Thou fearless Voice, we soon had drooped again
 Where only Flood might quench or fire consume ;—
 Well might False Faith revile thee, whilst the True
 Thou summoned like a dead saint from the tomb,
 In light and love to walk the earth anew,
 Nor vainly cast, where'er her altars rise,
 Fresh incense on the pure heart's sacrifice !

v.

Thine was the martyr-soul, enrobed with flame
 As Hebrew Psalmist was, that fervid King
 On Ruin's verge who sat or could not sing,—
 In depths of woe the ecstatic vision came,
 While passion rent the heart and ruled the frame ;
 Whose lyre, like thine, a sweeter note would bring
 When Pain compelled and Sorrow swept the string ;
 Thy kindred cross will ever link thy name
 With his, who both beside the sheepfold grew ;—
 Take, then, the pledge a thankful world bestows,
 The cup of "auld acquaintance" ever new,
 The same in Shepherd-Psalm that "overflows ;"
 Long as thy laurels live, with his entwined,
 Will Hope's great "haggis" reek for all mankind !

vi.

Lone shepherds far away in southern seas
 Enraptured are by Mailie's plaintive moan ;
 By light of whaler's fire in frigid zone
 Rides "Tam o' Shanter" madly through the breeze ;
 Behold, our "Holy Willie" on his knees
 In Syrian tent ; by sweet-voiced Mendelssohn
 Wherever wind may blow is "cauld blast" blown ;

The "Jolly Beggars" in hilarious ease
Join "Holy Fair" beneath the Sphinx's nose ;
The "ae fond kiss" renewed on every shore ;
More wide than Amazon "sweet Afton" flows ;
The "banks and braes" are fresh for evermore ;
And strange new tongues the world has not yet heard
Shall sing thee "Auld Lang Syne," Immortal Bard !

ROBIN REDIVIVUS:

AN INTERVIEW WITH BURNS.

Oh ! for a waff o' that snell win'
On Robin's pow "blew hansel in ;"
Love's frolic wild and flustering din,
Unheeded then,
But evermore to dirl and spin
Thro' hearts o' men !

My rhyme it had nae further gane,
While sitting on a brook-side stane,
A busy bumble in my brain,
 When, sooth to tell,
There at my elbow, flesh and bane,
 Sat Rab himsel'.

He leugh to see me gape and glower,
To see me near-haun whummelt ower,
Wi' draps o' Terror's cauldrife shower
Upon my broo,

To hear my tongue, dry as the stour,
Click in my mou'.

"Tut, man," said he, "why fidge and reel?
Nae wisp o' strae or pock o' meal
Could harm ye less." Quoth I, "Braw chiel,
I'm in a swither,
Ye're Robin Burns, or else the Deil,
Tane or the tither."

"The Deil! and what for no?" cried he;
"If cups o' kindness, twa or three,
Lang syne hae passed 'tween him and me,
'Twas no his blame;
Unbidden weet aye blins my e'e
To hear his name.

"And up in yonder bonnie sphere,
They think mair o' the Deil than here;
His wark to keep the causeway clear
Wi' subtle skill,—
Big souls are they wha can revere
Baith guid and ill."

"Weel, Rab," quoth I, "ye've lent a haun'
To keep the Cart o' Progress gaun,
Whaur midden holes o' grace wad staun'
At the kirk door;
And braw folk there, wi' faces thrawn,
Thou skelpit sore."

“Nae doubt, I’ve been ower fierce and fell,
 Forgetfu’ I had fauts mysel’,
 But whether come frae Heaven or Hell,
 It had to be,
 As needless try to curb or quell
 The rowin’ sea.

“Seek ye in every neuk and hole
 Where sorrows, like the worming mole,
 Gnaw deep and rend the quivering soul
 Wi’ tooth and claw—
 A lowin’ heart is sair to thole
 Abune them a’.

“Ere I could sing my wee bit sang,
 Oh frien’, it cost me mony a pang—
 The agony that keepit thrang
 My rhyming noddle ;
 Nor, house and hainin’ a’ gaun wrang,
 Cared I a bodle !”

“D’ye mind the lasses ?” whispered I.
 “Brawly !” he groaned ; “I winna lie ;
 Love’s e’e is fain, and never dry ;
 And mine, I ween,
 Whiles roved for mony mae forbye
 My bonnie Jean.”

I saw the blush his cheek displayed ;
 In glowing e’e a brightening shade ;
 The tremor on his lip that played—
 “Ha ! come what will,

While Rob is Rob, and jade is jade—
I lo'e them still !”

“Bravo ! with a’ my heart,” I cried,
“The odious prude thou hast defied,
Hypocrisy and holy pride,
Wi’ a’ their scunner ;
That Lust would tremble at thy side,
I’d stake a hunner !

“The modest e’e, affection pure,
The honest heart in king or boor,
The hamely sang, the dainty flower
In yird or field,
The truth that’s crushed amid the stour
And winna’ yield ;

“The cottar wi’ his haffets bare
At ingleside in wrestling prayer,
His cattle housed, his bairnies there
A’ gathered roun’ ;
His wee bit sowp o’ halesome fare
When sun gaes down ;

“’Twixt lad an’ lass the tender pain,
The cruel rug when toil is vain,
The lingering hope in lover’s grane
That canna be,
The patriot’s on the battle plain
For Liberty ;

"The hale braw world, baith but an' ben,
 A snug wee house for weary men,
 Wi' smiling board an' chimlie en'
 For each and ither,
 And ilka chiel, contented then,
 Lo'ed like a brither !

"These, these are they thy sorrows bought,
 When for us a' thy *facht* was fought ;
 What tho' the mead thy bosom sought
 It never cam' ?
 See ! Love has brewed her peck o' maut—
 We'll hae a dram !

"Here's to thee, Rab ! ye needna spier
 Wha's King o' men, I'll pledge thee here ;
 A' ither cups are feckless cheer
 Match'd wi' thine ain !"
 The tassie I began to rear,
 But—Rab was gane.

A TWA-HANDED CRACK IN HADES.

"Rax me the goblet, worthy crony,"
 Quoth Shanter Tam to Souter Johnny,
 "I seem na to hae tasted ony
 A towmond maist—
 Tho' like yoursel' a skin-and-bony
 Yet drouthy ghaist."

“Weel, Tam, (for guid sake, steek the door!)
Havena we had twal’ times galore
O’ a’ this centenary splore?
 Wha brocht it here,
For me, may let it sleep and snore
 Ten hunner year!

“Puir Rab! they didna mean to hurt,
But oh! they row’d him in the dirt;
Rosie, nae less, roused a’ his art
 And did it gran’,
As tho’ upon a ragman’s cart
 He took his stan’.”

“Come, Johnny, weet your rusty thrapple;
Wi’ higher powers ye needna grapple—
Thank goodness, they hae tint their tattle,
 And rack’d their tethers;
Let wind nae mair their inwards rattle—
 Peace to their blethers!”

“My couthie frien’, it gars me grane
To hear them curse, wi’ might and main,
Some chiels’ apologetic vein
 Ower Rab’s auld duddies,
And yet, ten waur, indulge their ain—
 The menseless cuddies!

“Some things there are that fain would dee
Would but the gowkies let them be—

I'm sure nae pleasure it can gie
 But sad mischievin'
To dirt-made chaps like you and me,
 To keep them leevin'.

"Damn'd be that deathless whisky-gill
That anti-moralistic pill,
That pride o' theirs in gabbling skill
 To rake and splutter—
Would you find Rab and comfort still?
 Go, search the gutter!

"Na, na, that airt we winna gang ;
We a' a wee thing whiles gae wrang,
Nae doubt ; but Virtue's clatterbang
 Will never mend it ;
A swatch o' Robin's bonnie sang,
 Nocht else can end it."

"Johnnie, your haun', its rale weel spoken ;
This cudgel let me rear in token—
Some heads are hale that should be broken
 Like cockle-shell ;—
Come skyward, and our gabs we'll sloken
 Wi' Rab himsel'."

THE CRAIKIN' CRAW.

I.—RETRIBUTION.

A craw sat craikin' on a tree,
 Its leefu' lane, its leefu' lane ;
 A callant strack it wi' a stane,—
 It wadna flee, it wadna flee ;—
 He clamb the tree, he claught the craw,
 An' syne its thrapple he wad thraw,
 It wadna dee, it wadna dee ;—
 He mauled it weel, he swung it roun'—
 It wadna kill, it wadna kill ;—
 He took it to the miller's mill,
 He grew afeared an' wished it dead,
 He plunged it three times ower the head,
 Wi' mony a wicked stroke an' stoun,—
 It wadna droun, it wadna droun ;—
 To send it hame he tried an' tried,
 "Awa', awa', black beast !" he cried,—
 It wadna gang, it wadna gang,
 But wi' a sudden skreigh it sprang
 Upon his croun, upon his croun.

Waes me, waes me ! it settled there,
 An' naething wad it stir ava,—
 That craikin' craw, that craikin' craw ;—
 Lang years hae come an' fled since then,
 The callant is threescore an' ten,—
 It craiks awa', it craiks awa' ;

The auld man's heart is unco sair,
 He fain wad hae the craw to flee,—
 That canna be, that canna be ;—
It sits upon his thin grey hair
For evermair, for evermair !

II.—REDEMPTION.

The callant was threescore an' ten,—
He wandered but, he wandered ben ;
 It was a waesome sight to see,
 He tried to live, he couldna dee.
Syne he gaed out, an' syne cam' in,—
O sic a din ! O sic a din !
Guid save us, that it should be sae,
The craw sat craikin' night an' day
 Upon his croun, upon his croun,—
 When he gat up, when he lay doun
It aye was there, it aye was there,
Upon the auld man's thin grey hair ;—
 He tried to greet, he tried to pray,
 But that (waes me !) he couldna dae ;
His tongue wad aye rin owre wi' lees
Whene'er he drappit on his knees,—
 His heart was toom as ony drum,—
He'd gi'en the warld wi' a' its gear
For ae saut tear, for ae saut tear,—
 It wadna come, it wadna come.

Quoth he, "O wad my heart but break !"
Na, na, the craw maun hae its craik ;

He tried to stap his ain auld breath,
Held oot a bluidy haun' to Death,—
 Wi' rape, or at the roarin' linn—
 Nae harm was dune, nae harm was dune;
In slippery loops o' hempen tether
He swung as lightly as a feather;
He clamb the craig, an' ower he loupit,
But like a cork nae waur he coupit;
The rowin' flood frae bank to brae
Bore him as bravely as a strae;
Naething he ever met or saw
Could hurt him but that craikin' craw;
An' naewhere wad it haud its blether,
 Gang he into the dinsome street
 Whaur clatterin' beasts an' bodies meet,
Or 'mong the whaups on moorland heather.

Ae night the snaw was on the grun',
The Christmas revels had begun;
But nane had he o' joyous fare,
His heart was wae, his head was sair,
And on his grey pow, warst of a',
That craikin' craw, that craikin' craw.

A weary stranger passin' by,
 Cam' to the auld man's door an' chappit
(The craw it gie'd a gruesome cry,
 Twice ower its twa black wings it clappit).
The auld man shook wi' fear; quoth he,
 "Whae'er ye be, whae'er ye be,

Gae wa', gae wa', an' come na here
For ony gude o' Christian cheer."
Then frae the drivin' snaws oot-bye
A voice cam' plaintive in reply :
" Hae mercy, mercy on the puir,—
 A wee bit lowe to dry my claes,
 A fender for my frozen taes,
I want nae mair, I want nae mair."

He rose to let the stranger in,—
The craw it made a desperate din ;
" Deil tak' ye, bletherin' beast ! " he cried,
The sneekit door then opened wide
To gi'e the stranger welcome true,
 But nane was there, but nane was there,
 Only an icy blast o' air
That thrill'd his auld banes thro' an' thro' ;—
 A fearfu' glamour o'er him fell,
 What happened syne he ne'er could tell,—
But something in his heart was new.

The weary craw had craik'd its last,
It flew forth on the bitter blast ;—
The auld man at his ain hearth-stane,
His leefu' lane, his leefu' lane,
Sat doun an' grat thro' a' that night,
Till baith his e'en near lost their sight,
Wi' joy that strack the angels dumb,—
The Christ had come ! the Christ had come !

THE AULD THORN TREE.

On Craigie knowes
 An auld thorn grows,—
 Lang has it been a frien' to me,
 That auld thorn tree, that auld thorn tree,
 On Craigie knowes.

Lang syne, lang syne,
 I ca'd it mine,
 When first that auld thorn tree I saw
 Buskin' the green braes far awa',—
 Lang syne, lang syne.

A bairn was I,
 Thro' wat or dry
 Chasin' the bum-bees an' the birdies,
 Wearin' my first breeks on my hurdies,—
 A bairn was I.

It strack my e'e
 Sae winsomely,
 I ne'er sin' syne hae seen anither ;
 I lo'e 't as it had been my mither,—
 That auld thorn tree.

Wi' reverent air,
 Would I repair
 Like ither folk to bare my pow
 In the auld kirk on Gallows-knowe,—
 Wi' reverent air.

Frae faither's pew,
The window thro'
On the far knowes that thorn I saw,
Like wee bird's feather faint an' sma',—
Frae faither's pew.

It grew to be
God's priest to me ;
It telt me things I shouldna dae ;
It made me glad, it made me wae,—
That auld thorn tree.

For its ain sake
I kept awake,
When ither folk sank doun an' sleepit ;
My twa blest een aye gleg it keepit,—
For its ain sake.

I dinna ken
But souls o' men
Wad maybe gang the richt road hame,
If they wad keep their een the same,—
I dinna ken.

That auld thorn tree,
It follows me,—
In cities or on loupin' seas
I see it wavin' in the breeze,—
That auld thorn tree.

Absent for years,
I hae my fears,—

My heart wi' very joy is sair
To find it there, to find it there,—
Absent for years.

Could I but see
Hope smile on me,
As oft the daybreak on thy crest,
Or the warm crimson frae the west,
O auld thorn tree !

Could I but trust !
As thou e'en must,
Head-bare in mony a bitter blast,
Shaken, but stronger when it passed,—
Could I but trust !

Mine let it be,
Thy charity,—
The robins' refuge frae the snaws,
Their wee bit meal o' halesome haws—
Thy charity.

My thorn, my thorn !
Ae winter morn
The farmer thocht he'd strike the blow,
An' lay thee low, an' lay thee low,—
My thorn, my thorn !

Quoth I, gude faith !
Let be thy skaith ;
Or else thy sapless life and brittle
Snaps like a thread ! Lay down thy whittle !
Quoth I, gude faith !

The honest chiel
Said, Weel-a-weel,
Syne be it sae, syne be it sae,
Thrive thou and it till Judgment-day !—
The honest chiel !

O must thou dee,
My auld thorn tree ?
I'm daunerin' to the hungry moul,
Like ither fools, like ither fools,—
O must thou dee ?

Upon my grave,
Auld thorn, I crave
Some sprout o' thine may e'en let fa'
Thy scented blossoms like the snaw,—
Upon my grave !

Maybe, maybe,
For thee and me,
There is a place in that fair Fauld
Whaur growin' things nae mair grow auld,—
Maybe, maybe.

Great Tree o' trees !
If Thou but please,
Our life shall taintless be like Thine,
Plant of Renown, True Living Vine,—
Great Tree o' trees !

THE WEE BURN.

Bonnie wee bit wimplin' burnie,
 Warstlin' thro' amang the stanes,
 Whumlin' ower at ilka turnie,
 Nane the waur for a' thy pains ;
 Like a' young things fu' o' daffin',
 Loupin', rowin' down the brae,—
 Bouncin' brawly, greetin', laughin',
 Changefu' like sae mony mae.

How my heart rins down beside thee,
 Brisk like thine, and fu' o' glee !
 A' that ever may betide thee
 Like a trusty freen' to pree,—
 Whiles wi' ready tongue gib-gabbin',
 Rantin' rowdily alang ;
 Whiles in secret slowly sabbin'
 Sorrow's langsyne lanely sang.

Braes a' white wi' saintly gowan,
 Lace o' bonnie birken tree,
 Broom wi' yellow fire a' lowin',
 Haud their charms for thee and me,—
 Linties wi' their rustic rhymin'
 Lead thee to the hawthorn dell,
 Fairy-like the while are chimin'
 Hyacinth and heather-bell.

Whaur the buttercup sae glossy
 Keps the dew's fresh-fallen tears ;

Whaur on dreepin' banks and mossy
Grasses rise like swords and spears ;
Whaur wee minnows, unco happy,
On thy sunny bosom shine,—
And the laverock drinks its drappie
O' the best o' heaven-brewn wine.

Ower the linn I see thee linkin'
Like an arrow frae the bow,—
Yonder sits an auld man thinkin',
On a muckle stane below :—
And a hare frae hunter fleein',
'Mang the bracken hirples thro',
Stains thee wi' its bluid, and deein',
For the last time weets its mou'.

Whan the slow wings o' the gloamin'
Spread their saftness roun' an' roun',
Up the glen twa lovers roamin'
Hear thy sang and settle down ;—
On a tree stump sit thegither—
He is strong, and she is fair ;
O how fain wi' ane anither,—
And it may be nevermair !

Blythe wee burnie ! auld creation
May nae aulder be than thou ;
And the latest generation
Still may see thee on this knowe !
Mony queer auld-fashioned bodies,
Worshippin' the sun and mune,

Here hae met to wash their duddies,
Or to paint their freckled skin.

Mony Hielan' raids for thievin'
Back an' for' hae passed thee by :—
Thou their mou's and cloots reliev'in'—
Puir wee lambs and muckle kye.
Aft the clans hae made thee muddy
Wi' their fechtin' might an' main ;
Aften ran thy waters ruddy
Wi' the life's bluid o' the slain !

Thou hast lang since left behind thee
Thae unhappy graceless days,
And in thankfu' peace we find thee
Bubblin' doun the same auld braes ;—
Bairn o' some heath-covered fountain,
Nursling' o' the cloud and breeze,
Fondled by the mist-clad mountain,
Dandled on its rocky knees !

See ! how sturdy now thou boundest
On by yonder mossy wheel,
Whaur wi' groanin' mill thou soundest
Like a very thunder-peal,—
While the miller's daft wee doggie
Rows upon the bank sae green,
And his wean wi' parritch coggie
Keps thy jaups, wi' glowerin' een.

On thou flow'st for gentle, simple,
Close by mony a house an' ha',—

By the clachan inn dost wimple,
By the kirk-yard's broken wa' ;—
On till in the silent river
(Death's cauld flood we a' maun feel)
Thy sweet sang is hushed for ever,—
Blythe wee burnie, fare-thee-weel !

SYMPATHY.

I heard, amid a group of barefoot boys,
One urchin say, "This is the lassie's grave ;"
And in a moment their shrill-piping noise
Was hushed. Puir lassie ! by the clear crisp wave,
And the bright yestermorn, enticed to gain
The rapture of a first plunge on the shore ;
But ah ! the fatal grip of sinewy pain
Which made thy first the last for evermore !

No help nor witness to thy lingering throes,
Spent, lonely one ! from home and kindred far ;
I love thee for thy young life's hapless close ;
To me thou shinest like a sweet sad star ;—

With this wee flower, upon the new-laid sod
I drop a tear, and wish thee well with God !

SOUTER WILLIE:

AN EPISODE.

Dark was the night and keen the blast
 That blew as it had blawn its last,
 And sharply fell the blattering sleet,
 Upon the auld man's naked feet,
 While in his arms he press'd the bairn
 And sought the shelter o' the cairn.

A queer auld carle was Souter Willie,
 Clean daft, yet only skin-deep silly ;
 O' common prudence he had nane ;
 His sense could scarcely stan' its lane ;
 Yet gumption had, nae doubt, in plenty
 Hadna his neibors been sae scanty :
 Denied of Heaven the grace o' thievin',
 He made himsel' an honest livin'—
 Darning auld bauchles, boots, an' shoon ;
 Sair faught had he when a' was dune,
 Thro' muckle sweat and weary swither,
 To keep his skin an' banes thegither.

Fine shoon he made, but, sooth to tell,
 He never wore a shoe himsel',
 Close at his wark a' nicht he keepit,
 And a' day lang he snor'd an' sleepit ;
 'Mid thunder peals and lightning flame,

When ither folk would stay at hame,
Daft body ! he would lea' his wark,
And, like a warlock in the dark,
Wi' shoonless feet an' dreepin' duds,
Gang arm in arm wi' rowin' floods ;
Or cross the heath for mony a mile,
Croonin' a wee bit sang the while ;
Or thro' the storm-struck forest rakin',
While trees like shanks o' pipes were breakin' ;
Or in some deep untrodden dell
Sit chatterin' to his lanesome sel'.

Auld Souter Willie's heart was guid,
But in an ill-faur'd frame was hid,—
His een were thrawn, his back was humpit,
His croon had never kenn'd a hair,
An auld red nightcap flappit there
While at his wark he rax'd an' thumpit.
His face had ae resplendent feature,
Worn by nae ither man or creature,—
A nose had he o' wondrous power
That micht hae served for three or four,
And wi' as mony hues upon it
As Joseph's coat or Aaron's bonnet.
Shrivell'd and lean, in stature scrimp,
Ae leg was bent, and ane was limp,—
Twa thoombs on ae haun', nane on tither,
His parts were a' reel-ral thegither ;
As tho' Mischance, not over nice,
Had fixed them by the cast o' dice.

Dark was the night; the icy blast
Like vengeance on the wing flew past,
While o'er the moorland waste the Souter
Clasping his twa arms tight aboot her,
Fled swiftly with the slumbering bairn
For shelter at the whinstane cairn.

He reached the place, he gasped a prayer,
Stark deid—there was a woman there ;
Half on the stanes, half on the sod,
Her pallid face turned up to God,
As in the moonbeams' watery sheen
Her corse was for an instant seen.

Like timid hare press'd in the chase,
Auld Willie hurried from the place,
Doun the stey braeface o' the glen,
And thro' the " Deil's " ghost-haunted den,
Where midnight gloom and torrent's roar
Never had stirr'd one fear before.
Nor had he known these strange alarms
Save for the treasure in his arms,—
Wee bairn, sair fraucht in time o' need
Betwixt the living and the deid ;
For it, his full heart wished for hame ;
For it, he breathed the Saviour's name,
That the All-merciful and mild
Would yield His wrath and spare the child.

And now he nears the foaming tide,
Which spreads fell ruin far and wide,

On-rushing with a frightful leap
Into the depths, five fathoms deep.
With rolling thunder crowned with spray
The floods are forth on holiday ;
And scarce the Deil himsel' could ken
The wreckage o' his ain dark den.

The timber-brig whereto he sped
Stands firm beneath the auld man's tread.
Alas ! alas ! the hameward shore,
Oft yielding to his touch before,
Will print his living feet nae mair,—
Ae ither step, he had been there,
But sudden came a mighty blast,
And a great oak-tree groaned its last ;
Prone on the tender planks it fell,—
Then rose one weird and desperate yell ;
One moment rose, then all was hush'd,
Only the waters roar'd and gush'd ;
O'er-awed by innocence and death,
It seemed the tempest held its breath !

The morning dawned : a dreadful tale
Was wafted over hill and dale ;
In a small nook of mossy ground
The Souter and the bairn were found ;
Among the tangled thorns they lay,—
The flood had washed their souls away ;—
A lifeless bairn on lifeless breast
In deathless agony was press'd.

Up on the moorland's breezy height,
All senseless to the day or night,
Hard whinstanes pillowing her head,
The mother of the babe lay dead.
While now the sun shone on her face,
A lad came whistling to the place,—
He ceased, he stood, he stared, he ran,
More like a greyhound than a man,
And scarcely a full breath he drew
Till the whole vale the tidings knew.

Poor soul ! her story ne'er was told,
Save this, she perished in the cold ;
With a few rags of raiment clad,
And it was all the wealth she had.
Beside her lay an infant's hood,
Oatcake, and ither scraps o' food ;
A few sticks gathered for a fire
Within the auld weed-mantled byre,
Where in sad poortith's lonely plight
She left her sleeping babe last night ;
No morsel lingered in her store
And forth she went to beg for more ;
" 'Tis but a short run through the rain,"
Said she, " I'll soon be back again."

'Twas there the Souter chanced to stray,
And bore the innocent away,
In terror lest the bairn should waken,
Poor friendless thing, outcast, forsaken !

Next day a common grave was made,
And there the luckless three were laid ;
The sexton with his shovel came,
And happ'd them in their last lang hame ;
This done, he tapp'd his weel-worn mull,
And to himsel' said trade was dull ;
"Let times," quoth he, "be bad enough,
There's comfort in a pinch o' snuff !"

Nane thocht that Willie e'er would dee ;
He aye had been, and aye would be.
But ah ! the finest form e'er cast
Maun fail, and reach the grun' at last ;
And sooth ! who came to break or bruise,
Not much the Souter had to lose.

They searched his house wi' curious eyes—
To find an angel in disguise ;
One had been there, tho' all unknown,
Whose heart God fashioned like His own.
In scraps o' pictures on the wa's,
In daisy chains, in hips an' ha's,
In odds and ends in vast array
That little children use in play,
'Twas clear that he had seen full well
Beauty in a' things but himsel' ;—
The solace of his toils and pains
Were singing birds and silly weans,—
The green leaves on the summer trees,
The whispering music of the breeze ;

The wee burns wimplin' doun the braes—
Nature in a' her simple ways ;
Or when, confounding east and west,
The storms obeyed her stern behest,—
Spake from the heaven in thunder tones,
And shook the dead men in their bones.

Daft body ! he could see right well
God's hand in a' things but himsel'.
How sad and lonely he had been,
Fit to see all, not to be seen !
And when at last the ransom came,
And his free spirit wandered hame,
How beautiful to such as he
The unveiled face of God would be !

SAIR HEART.

The day is wearin' to its fa',
 The sky fu' o' unfallen snaw—
 Sae woefully, sae wearily ;—
 Dark is the pine tree on the hill,
 The yew-tree shade is darker still—
 Sae dolefully, sae drearily.

Oh that my heart had greetin' een !
 But nane will come whaur tears hae been,
 Sae woefully, sae wearily ;—
 A wee bird in the cauld keen air
 Sits by as tho' its heart was sair—
 Sae dolefully, sae drearily.

Ae brown leaf quivers on the tree,
 The wee bird sits and blinks at me,
 Sae woefully, sae wearily ;—
 The leaf is fa'en, the bird is gane,
 The gloomy mirk and me alane,
 Sae dolefully, sae drearily.

The leaf lies doun on Nature's breast,
 The wee bird in its sheltering nest,
 Not woefully, nor wearily ;—
 Oh, heart of mine ! there's welcome there,—
 Gang hame to God, and mourn nae mair
 Sae dolefully, sae drearily !

FATHER'S OLD CLOCK.

CANTO THE FIRST.

Father's old Clock ! I list with tears
 To that slow steady stroke of thine ;
 What hast thou done with all his years ?
 And now what would'st thou do with mine ?

Full fourscore years he gave to thee,
 In patient hope and loving trust,
 Nor knew how cruel thou could'st be
 To beat them into viewless dust.

Swing after swing, and stroke on stroke,
 A weary warfare thou did'st wage ;
 His pride of budding youth it broke,
 And wore down his declining age.

Sometimes soft Mercy's tender feet
 Have safely trod the tiger's den ;
 Eagles have spared the lambkin's bleat,
 And lions have been mild to men.

The fierce bear on his milk-white floor,
 Where bird ne'er sang, and grass ne'er grew,
 Has torn the flesh and lapp'd the gore
 Of many a bold ship's gallant crew ;

Yet has he known a gentler mood,—
With lazy jaws and languid eye ;
Like a dull ox bewildered stood
And left the rash youth room to fly,—

To fly where he a mother's pain
Might soothe to see her sailor boy ;
Or wandering in the greenwood lane
Kindle some love-struck maiden's joy.

But thou, old pitiless imp of Time !
Art more than any beast of prey,—
With cruel teeth and hungry chime,
And measured stroke that will not stay.

Hard is thy heart, and hooped with steel ;
No dews of mercy dight thy face ;
No tenderness thy hands reveal ;
And deadly slow thy hurrying pace.

Click, clack,—once, twice,—on, on, for ever,
The giant years thou breakest small ;
Let life be like a shoreless river,
Drop, drop,—drop, drop,—thou drainest all !

Oh false, oh unsuspected friend,
Why give my sire the secret blow ?
Why to its mouldy prison send
His honoured head of saintly snow ?

His days are numbered past recall,
And thou who told them still art there,
Stiff'ning thy straight back 'gainst the wall
With mocking and defiant air !

Go, hide thy blear'd and shameless face !
Sooner than thou should'st spill my life,
I would, Fate reave me from my place
By hangman's rope or bandit's knife !

Vague skeleton of ghostly power !
Let go thy hand, unhook thy tongue ;
Thou strik'st thyself the fatal hour,—
Thy doom is reached, thy knell is rung !—

Ah me ! a lingering echo there
That wafts within my fevered breast
A breath of cool and balmy air
From spicy islands of the blest.

Father's old Clock ! forgive, forgive !
When filial love so wildly rages ;
Yes, yes ; fain would I let thee live,
Live on unhurt a thousand ages !

I set me down close at thy feet ;
I see thy face begin to shine ;
In love and peace our bosoms beat,
As did my father's heart and mine.

I feel that kindly smile ; I see
A rim of glory round thy head ;
My father's spirit lives in thee,—
I know, I know he is not dead !

Thou shinest thro' the mist of tears ;
Old Clock ! thou art a spirit too,
And heir to the eternal spheres
Where old things are for ever new !

CANTO THE SECOND.

All things in the Almighty's hand
Are dower'd with mystic eyes and ears,
A secret omnipresent band
In earth and sky and rolling years

In the grey dawning's drowsy star,
And in the evening's whispering breeze ;
In gloomy hailstorm's rattling car,
Or sunbeam shimmering thro' the trees :

God's witnesses,—how manifold !
The linnet in the hawthorn bower,
When the sweet tale of love is told,
Bears witness with the daisy flower ;

And many a dead insensate thing
For ever keeps the mournful token,
When years bear falsehood on their wing,
And love is lost and vows are broken.

Father's old Clock ! bear witness thou,
How oft he fell, how oft he rose,—
No coward fear to cloud his brow,
No shame to rankle in his woes.

O bliss ! enriched by earthly care,
The envy of the angel host,
When in the home of wedded pair
God's fear is found, and never lost !

When father and his new-made bride
Wedded their praises for the Throne,
Heaven op'd its pearly windows wide
And lent a music all its own.

Old Clock ! thy finger mark'd the time
When kneeling at the fireside chair,
He mingled with thy softening chime
The tremor of his family prayer !

Blame not the great God over all
If life is hard, and toils are weary ;
If love should sometimes taste like gall,
And bliss itself grow dull and dreary.

We reach the waters of despair ;
We sit and shiver at the brink ;
Yet there is more that we can bear,—
We fain would, but we cannot sink !

Father's old Clock ! hast thou not seen
The sweat fall trickling from his face ?
And Sorrow's arrow, swift and keen,
Fly to the poor heart's wounded place ?

But soon as rest to nature came,
Those lids that let the lightning thro'
Were gleaming with a kindlier flame,
And wet with penitential dew.

Ye stolid children of repose !
Who never have inflicted pain,—
In whom love neither ebbs nor flows
Thro' lukewarm heart and stagnant brain,

Ye cannot pass the golden gates
Where Pity keeps her gracious dower ;
'Tis not for you sweet Mercy waits
In worship's reverential hour ;

'Tis not for you this dear old Clock
Records two souls well-knit together,
Who bore the brunt of many a shock,
And grew more kind thro' stormy weather.

When the soft shades of evening laid
Their folds upon the family altar,
How fervently the good man prayed !
How tremblingly his tongue would falter !

While pardon flowed from breast to breast,—
To those who gave 'twas richly given ;
Frets of the rough day sank to rest
Well-pillowed on the peace of heaven

O kind old Clock ! I give thee thanks :—
And witness thou my wayward will ;
Nor let me wander from their ranks
Who in their falls are rising still !

Not faintly in thy stroke I hear
The music of the Saviour's grace ;
His pitying love to me more dear
Because I see it in thy face !

OURISK'S AWA'.

Grey mornin' lifts a wat'ry e'e
 On gloomy ha' an' dreepin' tree,
 She kindly grieves an' sabs wi' me—
 Ourisk's awa'.

Wi' horny han' an' glancin' spade
 A cauld, cauld clayey bed is made,
 An' his wee banes to rest are laid—
 Ourisk's awa'.

Maybe it's wrang to mourn a beast,
 But he'd a lowin' heart at least,
 An' holier hasna king or priest !—
 Ourisk's awa'.

His e'e-flash, as on me it fell,
 Spak what nae tongue o' man could tell,
 An' nae dog but his bonnie sel'—
 Ourisk's awa'.

He sat ance at a scholar's feet,
 Where mony puppies used to meet,
 An' few could brag mair profit be't—
 Ourisk's awa'.

But for he hated college fetters
 He wad hae been a pup o' letters ;
 Dog-Latin spak as weel's his betters—
 Ourisk's awa'.

Forfaughten sair, he sought at Mains *
Sweet solace to his puppy brains,
Rangin' the fields, an' sheughs, an' drains—
Ourisk's awa'.

By Endrick's brambly banks an' braes
Rattens an' rabbits he wad raise ;
But now, alas ! frae frien's an' faes,
Ourisk's awa'.

He row'd an' rantit on the green,
Swaggin' his tail, o' tails the queen !
Mair brisk was never lambkin seen—
Ourisk's awa'.

His wee face hid ahint a screen
O' shaggy locks, an' then his e'en,
Like lichtit lucifers between—
Ourisk's awa'.

He keepit Nature's fechtin' laws,
An' gar'd the fae gie owre wi' jaws
An' settle it wi' legs an' paws,—
Ourisk's awa'.

He lo'ed the chase, but fear'd the gun,
And for himsel' sought a' the fun,
Like ither folk that rive or run—
Ourisk's awa'.

* A mansion-house on the Endrick, near Loch Lomond.

O had that day ne'er open'd e'e
That greetin' saw baith him an' me,
The Mains an' happiness to lea'e !—
Ourisk's awa'.

On Embro's waukit hichts an' howes
Nae rabbit rins, nae bracken grows,
Nae grassy mead where Ourisk rows,
Ourisk's awa'.

Foul fa' the first hard-hearted loon
That causey'd streets an' made a toun—
A gude rough cudgel to his croon—
Ourisk's awa'.

Ourisk's auld banes, an' mony mair
O' martyr dogs that suffer'd sair,
Cry, " Hit him hard, an' dinna spare !"—
Ourisk's awa'.

Nae mair the dear wee sonsie doggie,
Wi' waggin' tail an' liftit luggie,
Rins at my feet—poor little puggie !—
Ourisk's awa'.

Like roses, loves grow auld an' wither,
An' seldom friendships haud thegither,
But Ourisk lo'ed me like a brither—
Ourisk's awa'.

Ne'er thocht ane o' his puggy race
Could ever haud sic gifts an' grace,
Or in my heart sae large a place—
Ourisk's awa'.

Ae rest remains for him an' me,
Ae Frien', a kinder couldna be,
Wha took him hame an' closed his e'e—
Ourisk's awa'.

Man lives his day as weel's his dog,
Till, after mony a rive and rug,
Death breaks the tether wi' a tug—
An' *he's* awa'.

DISCONSOLATE.

I bide nae earthly things ava ;
 The former freen's are dweened awa,—
 Gude tak' me hame to meet them a'

In yon braw Toun,
 Where nae puir body's heid is sair,
 Saut tears frae sair een drap nae mair,
 And silver founts in sunny air
 Loup up and down !

The howffs o' men are ragin' fu'
 Wi' mony a yaffin' yelpin' crew,—
 Gude send to me short days and few

Till I arise
 To greet lost frien's, where honest men
 Meet in auld Abram's but-an'-ben,
 Or sup at Job's ain chimlie en'
 In Paradise !

Waes me ! I canna shed a tear ;
 My heart is dry o' hope or fear ;
 Nane but the big black Deil is near

To comfort me,—
 He hauds his luggie to my chin,
 Puts in my haun his cutty spoon,
 " You'll like it weel, ance ye begin,"
 Aye, aye, quoth he.

It isna that I lack nae gear,
It isna that I've nocht to fear,
It isna that a dribblin' tear
 Draps nae mair doun ;
My daily bread is hard to win,
I'm scaur'd wi' cares baith oot and in,
Bent low beneath a wecht o' sin
 My croun, my croun.

But a' that dool, and muckle mair,
The dowie heart can crouselly bear
While round it lies a Faither's care
 For waunert wean ;—
Or Shepherd's love, whase bluid did dreep
For me, a daft-like doiter'd sheep,
Frae heavenly fountains large and deep—
 Like rain, like rain !

THE AULD WIFE AT THE WHEEL.

A coggie fu', a tidy cot,
 Wi' love and truth to spin the reel,
 Blythe ever be the winding o't,
 My wee auld wifie at the wheel !

When heart is sick, and heid is sair,
 And stockings oot at tae and heel,
 Ne'er fash my thoom, for thou art there,
 My wee auld wifie at the wheel !

My parritch ne'er will want for saut,
 Nor girnal e'er be scant o' meal,
 Nor fail a drappie o' the maut,
 My wee auld wifie at the wheel !

Braw queans there are wi' scornfu' e'e,
 And some are slippery as an eel,
 I carena them a broon bawbee,
 My wee auld wifie at the wheel !

Till drops o' rain forget to fa',
 Nor mice hae sense enough to squeal,
 Trig be thy mutch and like the snaw,
 My wee auld wifie at the wheel !

We, ane and a', gang toddlin' hame,
 We, ane and a', maun coup the creel,
 Syne leave thee a heroic name,
 My wee auld wifie at the wheel !

Life may be short, or may be lang,
The brae-tap unco sair to speil ;
Aye breest it wi' a bonnie sang,
My wee auld wifie at the wheel !

When life like sawdust a' rins oot,
The e'e maun close, and then fareweel
To every mortal care and clout,
My wee auld wifie at the wheel !

Till Heaven itsel' can laugh nae mair,
And frowns on every canty chiel',
They'll need the likes o' thee up there,
My wee auld wifie at the wheel !

MOEL FAMMA.

(*Welsh "Mother of Mountains," surmounted by
Jubilee Tower in ruins.*)

The scene from this high summit where I stand—
 So fair it seems to my enchanted eye—
 Might be an angel's dream in fairyland,
 Drawn from the loveliest garden of the sky ;
 Yet one sad blot I see by man's weak hand,
 An unromantic ruin here doth lie,
 Memorial tower, frail, formless at the best,
 To tell that Royal George, by Heaven's behest,
 Had reigned full fifty years. So poor an aim
 Filled the old elements with wrathful shame ;
 Moel Famma, groaning to be dispossess'd,
 Shook the vile structure from her ancient crest,
 And bade all Nature o'er the wreck declare—
 The eternal God and the eternal hills are there.

GRANDFATHER'S FLUTE.

My auld grandfaither left to me
 A guid auld flute to keep me cheerie ;
 "Blythe be thy whistle, lad," quoth he,
 "Tho' thou thysel' be wae and weary."
 The auld flute, row'd wi' rozet strings,
 The ills o' life hae dunted sairly ;
 But sweet the warbling note it brings
 To dowie heart baith late and early.

Far, far ayont the rowin' sea
 Whaur Kaffirs roam wi' copper faces,
 Ae nicht I laid me down to dee
 In lanesomest o' lanely places ;
 Methocht my latest breath I drew,
 Nor kenn'd me near a Christian's dwelling,
 When sudden rapture thrilled me thro'—
 The strains o' "Home, Sweet Home" were swelling.

He played his flute. Wi' a' my micht
 I played on mine the same auld ditty ;
 When forth there cam' a kindly licht
 Wi' hauns to help and heart to pity.
 He wrapt me weel in woolly claes ;
 He nursed me, fed me like a brither ;
 Thro' mony canty nichts and days
 We sang, we laughed, we grat thegither.

LOVE AND WAR.

"Love is strong as death."

Twa bonnie e'en beyond compare,
 A ribbon in her coal-black hair ;
 Upon her breast, well-suited there,
 A bursting rose ;
 Sweetest o' young love's honey dew
 Lay ripening on her dainty mou' ;
 And best of a', her heart was true—
 The bonnie lass o' Lockerbie !

A sodger laddie caught her e'e ;
 A stalwart lad and brave was he,
 Wi' nodding plumes and kilted knee—
 She lo'ed him weel.
 His brave heart fluttered wi' surprise ;
 Love's gentle touch bedewed his eyes ;
 He wedded her 'neath smiling skies—
 The bonnie lass o' Lockerbie !

Then war-clouds gathered thick and fast,
 Wi' lurid flame and thunder-blast ;
 She trembled—it might be her last,
 Her last fond kiss !
 He sickened by the ancient Nile,
 No loving word for her the while ;
 Fear stole the sunshine frae her smile—
 The bonnie lass o' Lockerbie !

The sickness and the warfare o'er,
Proud in the laurels that he bore,
He hastened to his ain ha' door—

In Hope's blest hour !

Wae ! for the beautiful and brave !
They met him there wi' funeral stave,
Bearing his true love to the grave—
The bonnie lass o' Lockerbie !

There is ae Frien' for ever near,
Wha brings to man baith love and fear,
Wha kens weel hoo to dight the tear

Frae Sorrow's e'e !

To Him gang a' things leal and fair ;
Hope dawns in Him, and droops nae mair ;
Her sodger lad is seeking there
The bonnie lass o' Lockerbie !

A VISIT TO CRAIGENDUNTON :

TO A SICK CHILD.

My frail wee lass, like drooping flower,
 In shelter of thy moorland bower,
 At Hope's fair dawn and dewy hour
 Thy head laid low,
 By sore Affliction's envious power
 And cruel blow.

The grey mists darkened on the hill,
 The summer blast blew keen and chill,
 The nodding daisy bore it still—
 Less frail than thee,
 Nor felt the lingering woes that fill
 Thy wistfu' e'e.

Fain, fain would I, puir lassie, bring
 Better than laverock's throat and wing,
 That free thou mightest soar and sing
 From bed of pain,
 And make the house of mourning ring
 With joy again !

No need to bring sweet-breathing rose,
 Or scent that from the violet flows ;
 Here in this bower a floweret grows
 More sweet than they,
 And sweet for ever—not like those,
 Born to decay.

The Rose of Sharon, too, was bruised,
And from His wounds the unction oozed
Which kind Omnipotence hath used
For human weal,—
Pale Sorrow's fragrance interfused
To help and heal.

Wee dainty flower ! whate'er betide,
There is an angel at thy side,
Wafting the savour far and wide
Of tender grace,
That no dark hour of pain can hide
In thy meek face.

I saw the tear-drop stain the floor,
The deep, still grief thy parents bore ;
Saw following, as I sought the door,
Thy plaintive e'e ;
And still that look for evermore—
It follows me.

When kindlier skies shall crown our lot,
I see thee, sweet "Forget-me-not,"
By wimpling burn in some lown spot
On heavenly braes,
Where seeds of woe are all forgot
In flowers of praise !

EPISTLE

In Celebration of the Half-Jubilee of Ministerial Life.

Friends, comrades—for ye still are so—
 Of five-and-twenty years ago,
 Who stood in theologic row
 Like raw recruits,
 Or stirks whom cribs no more shall know
 Nor Hebrew roots,—

Ye who in Sorrow's lonesome den
 Have graned and warstled sair since then,
 Or cooled your cloots in mossy glen
 'Mong pastures green ;
 And ye whom Death has summoned ben
 Ahint the screen,—

I greet you a' wi' right good will
 On this the bleak side of the hill ;
 Tho' now not mine her bosom, still
 I keep one eye on
 The friend who gave life's opening thrill
 Old Mother Zion.

Oh friends ! let saut tears drench this ditty—
 The Deil has burnt his brumstane cootie :
 A pious Deil (the mair's the pity !),
 Your holy function
 He mocks in clachan, court, and city—
 With oil, not unction !

Ask him, auld rogue, the way to Hell ;
 Na, na, the fient o' him can tell ;
 Nor can his lips, love-slavor'd, spell
 The word *damnation* ;
 His faith rings clear as ony bell
 In a' creation.

Strength to his red-hot ribs, I say ;
 Saints frown and shudder as ye may !
 The Church of God has had its day—
 Let us be civil :
 Hail, Forward Movement ! rise and play,
 Church of the Devil !

Not so did Paul in ancient days
 God's temples of the faithful raise ;
 Our Churches,—oh ! the menseless craze,
 The modern problem,—
 How best can we, in heathen ways,
 Patch up and cobble 'em ?

By good St. Simon and St. James !
 The old sins walk with heavenly names ;
 And loathsome vice—it seldom shames
 In gold's effulgence ;
 Vile curse, more worthy of the flames
 Than Rome's indulgence.

Good cheer, my comrades ! gentle friends !
 Who wield your crooks for nobler ends,
 When fierce infernal wolf pretends,
 In woolly guise,

To be the meek lamb Mercy sends
In sacrifice.

For ye have seen auld wrinkled faces,
Deep-furrowed with repentant traces,
When they sank down to tak' their places
In Promised Land,
Glow with the beatific graces
At God's right hand.

Bravely the silver trump ye blew,
With all that joyful noise could do,—
Or piped it to a chosen few
On slender reed,
With but one Gospel note or two
To bless their need.

Oft have ye met the wanderer Cain,
Tainted, puir chiel, in bluid and bane ;
And soothed sweet Rachael in her pain
Of sore bereavement ;
Found David with his chuckie-stane
Of grand achievement.

And Judas, too, in gloomy shade,
Has crept behind with traitor's blade,
Then seemed to salve the wound he made
With Christ-like kiss ;—
'Twas no small boon to be betrayed
On terms like this !

In many a poor man's moleskin guise
Your Lord has blessed your waiting eyes,
That thorn-crowned bleeding Sacrifice
 Upon the tree,
Whose voiceless whisperings would rise—
 Friend, lov'st thou Me?

Great critics, modern-wise and zealous,
Those ploddering puffy German fellows,
Winnow with philosophic bellows
 The Gospel grain,
And lo! no better mead, they tell us,
 Than husks remain.

But good or ill wind blow its worst,
Blaw Learning till its haffets burst,
Blind Rage revile with lips accurst
 God's Word of grace,—
More pure, more vital than at first
 It holds its place!

So blustering tempests clear the sky,
And trodden seeds refuse to die;
So Word Incarnate, lifted high
 On Cross of shame,
Can capture all men, draw them nigh,
 And bring them hame!

Hail, Sacred Book! our fathers' pride,
Their children's comforter and guide,
Gang where they may to rest or ride
 On land or sea;

In cosy neuk at chimley side
No friend like thee !

Ye Gospel mysteries, all hail !
Tho' Fantasy adorn the tale ;—
Was prophet Jonah swallowed hale ?
Or this the blether—
He drank the ocean and the whale ?—
I care not whether !

But sweet and sensible and true,
And ever fresh as morning dew,
The love and mercy shining thro'
That Heaven ordains
For beasts, grown folk of every hue,
And duddy weans !

The Church stands sure, and ever will,
Tho' she of skaith has had her fill,
And sometimes on the holy hill
Is heard fierce wrangling ;
And clouts, not stainless, on her frill
Hing dounwards dangling.

It was the Foreign Mission cause—
The rich men's gifts drew loud applause ;
The kirk was fu', and in their brows
The gude folk crammed it,—
The widow's mite, not worth two straws—
Their silence damned it !

Yet Zion noble children bears,
True hearts and cleanly hands are theirs,
Fruit of the Saviour's fervent prayers,
 For whom He died,—
He sees them throng the temple stairs,
 Well-satisfied.

My brothers, champions of the Faith !
Let no dishonour stain your claith,
Or stop your ministerial breath
 Till Time shall end it ;
Then should the Judgment threaten skaith,
 May God defend it !

Alas ! there are whom nevermore
We meet this side old Time's Hall-door,
Our loved, revered Professors four,
 Eadie, and Harper,
Lindsay of exegetic lore,—
 None could be sharper ;

MacMichael, with the mobile face,
With kindly heart and queer grimace,—
“Noo state, p'raps, aye, the Deevil's case,
 P'raps, in his den ;
Ower weel,” quoth he, “ye ken the place,—
 Yes, aye, ye ken !”

Like shadows mirrored in a glass !
Yet lingering and loth to pass,—

Eadie still joined with Balaam's ass*
In bonds fraternal ;
Lindsay's auld *σαρκ* (*sarks*) laid on the grass†
Of fields supernal !

My gentle comrades, fare-ye-well !
What changes wait us who can tell ?
What tinklings of life's little bell
There yet may be?—
Gude grant us a' anither spell—
Our jubilee !

* Periodical joke of the Professor at the expense of some dull scholar in Hebrew : "Tuts, man, the ass spoke better Hebrew than that !"

† Discussions of remarkable acuteness and great length on St. Paul's use of the term "flesh."

OLD IMMORTALITY.

I.

Once, on Egyptian soil, by chance I strayed
 Into a Waste, which I remember well ;
 Grim rocks rose high, and cast a dismal shade
 Upon the sand, where scorching sunbeams fell ;
 The languid air would not have kissed the blade
 Of dewy grass, had there been one to tell ;—
 It knew Old Nile, his swarthy sons and daughters,
 Yet only near enough to mock his green-girt waters.

II.

I thought of past days when, on purple hills,
 Sweet Nature thrilled me with her notes of joy
 From feather'd throats, and from the bubbling rills,
 While the free winds, in their unhired employ,
 Brought me that odorous sense which life instils
 Into the love-struck and romantic boy—
 All this came back with old-time fascination
 In that lone place of dumb, weird, arid desolation.

III.

I crept aside from the fierce glare and heat,
 Whose shadow spread as tho' with blackest ink ;
 And there I found me at an old man's feet,
 Who stood upon a little bank, and on the brink
 Of some low den or anchorite retreat ;—
 He made my heart quake and my eyelids blink,
 So filled seemed he with a strange, lucid whiteness,
 As when a lamp doth shine with its own inward
 brightness.

IV.

He looked so old, then scarce looked old at all ;
From bright to brighter grew his lustrous eyes !
Over his brow I saw the forelock fall
More gold than grey, and a more glad sunrise
Than ever loosed dark Night's defeated thrall
Shone in his face, which glow'd like Paradise ;
Yet fearful stood I, in forlorn condition,
Breathless and stony-still beside this apparation.

V.

"Why comest thou into this region bare?"
Said he, in mellow tones and richly mild,
As when a silver bell rings through the air,—
It cheered me like the laughter of a child.
To this I answered, why I wandered there,
Or what strange fancy had my feet beguil'd,
I knew not ; but at home had just been falling
The sacred oil that sealed me for the preacher's calling.

VI.

"Long years have gone since the first day that I,"
Quoth he, "began that business ; it was done—"
"Long time indeed," I hastened to reply,
"If in thy youth the business was begun ;
And if in this wild Waste was raised thy cry,
The ample sphere could yield not more than one
For eager audience and a patient hearing !"
"Thy soul is dark," said he, "with mists of mere
appearing !

VII.

“ My field is large, nor are my hearers few,
Tho’ seldom apt to hear and to obey,
Or else the human family of two
Who dwelt in Eden had been there to-day ;
I saw the Flood rise—.” “ That thou could’st not do,”
Cried I. My faithless ear then heard him say
That unexhausted years, forever mounting,
Made not one passing hour in *his* way of accounting !

VIII.

“ My name is Immortality ; I stand
Where all the dreamy regions of the Past,
That are or shall be, yield at my command
Whate’er the Destinies have said shall last ;
A treasure-trove pluck’d from Destruction’s hand,
The flowers of life which Death would fain hold fast ;
But if thou doubt this tale of my poor telling
Here is my humble door, and welcome to my dwelling.”

IX.

He led, I followed ; all else there was gloom
Saving himself ; the doorway rude and strait,
It seemed the unblest entrance to a tomb,
The loneliest haunt and terminus of Fate,
Where souls, thrice dead already, meet their doom ;
Nor would I from the jaws of that grim gate
My steps have held from terrorised retreating
Had not my Guide looked back with a most kindly
greeting.

X.

“Friend, keep thy faith; stay not, nor doubt, nor fear;
With one step more thou hast the threshold cross’d;
The scene is changed which thou beholdest here,
And all the earth’s mortalities are lost—
Let me but make the cumber’d eyelids clear.”

He drew his hand across my brow and toss’d
Aside a somewhat which he called my blindness—
No better act I ever knew of human kindness.

XI.

For in a moment the dark doorway seemed
A dome wherein Immensity might dwell;
The purest light of lights within it streamed,
And at a glance I could distinguish well
A thousand charms where only I had deemed
To find an anchorite’s poor dingy cell—
Tier rose on tier of arch and gallery splendid,
And many a long-drawn aisle stretch’d far but never
ended.

XII.

More than aught else it smote me with amaze
To find the temple filled with shining ones,
Who flashed upon my sore-bewildered gaze
With the strong radiance of unnumber’d suns;
I had been fifty times struck lifeless by the blaze
Had not my brain been veil’d (as meek-eyed nuns
Are shielded from the world’s attempted wiling)
From scenes that might have been too fatally beguiling.

XIII.

I stood entranced amid the ambient throngs ;
I watch'd their fervent flitting to and fro ;
Their steps alone, it seemed, were yielding songs,
So rhythmically did they come and go ;
The music, too, was there for which one longs
But never hears, persuasive, soft, and slow,
Like far-off many waters in its sweetness,
Nor bound to cease, out-wearied by its own completeness.

XIV.

At last to my companion at my side
Enquiringly I turned—he met my sight
As a new star into the view might glide
Of some surprised astronomer, so bright
Beyond himself in beauty stood my guide,
He seemed the very soul of young delight,
Whose golden beams upon his forehead glancing,
No task of Life's eternal toil could be enhancing.

XV.

“ Behold,” said he, “ the hosts who my commands
Fulfil on joyful errands night and day ;
They bring me welcome presents from all lands,
And set them here in suitable array—
The secret things of faithful hearts and hands,
Death may not touch, nor tooth of Time's decay ;
Each in its order in my home protected,
By eyes of men and angels evermore inspected.

XVI.

“This you behold is but the vestibule
Of that unbuilt abode I call my own,
Whereof no niche, by measurement of rule,
In all its untold vastness can be known ;
Nor ever taught in any creature school
Whereby its wealth in numbers may be shewn ;—
But now, have done with needless sums and measures ;
Put on thy humblest looks, and come, inspect my
treasures !”

XVII.

Then showed he many curious things and rare,
From Ruination's age-long Empire saved ;
Elijah's mantle, Abel's crook, were there ;
The sling wherewith Goliath's wrath was brav'd ;
The pot of manna, Israel's desert fare ;
The two stones with the Ten great Words engraved ;
The silver trump the fiftieth year that sounded ;
The cords and staves wherewith the awful mount was
bounded.

XVIII.

With books, and arms, and pictured monument ;
With stands, and stalls, this House of Wonders
teemed ;
It held the veil, from top to bottom rent ;
The ladder-steps whereof the patriarch dreamed ;
The shoe which Boas bought with pure intent ;
The sword which at the gate of Eden gleamed,
Before whose dread approach our Parents hasted ;
The cruise of oil, meal-barrel too, that never wasted.

XIX.

A Peter's tear, still trembling, there was kept,
And never would its bitterness be dried ;
The sailor's bed whereon the Saviour slept ;
The spear which drank communion at His side ;
Her broken box who kiss'd His feet and wept,—
The very hairs with which the stains she dried ;
Two pence whose worth can nevermore be counted,
The saddle whence the good Samaritan dismounted.

XX.

Unnumbered things not writ on sacred page
Were there, with equal honours crown'd ;
Her feathered helm and patriotic rage
Who as the Maid of Orleans stands renown'd ;
The cup our English knight did not assuage
Until the wounded soldier's lips it found ;
With Dorcas' thread and thimble close beside them ;
Nor did Paul's winter cloak near by, and parchments,
hide them.

XXI.

Tokens of King Melchisedec I saw ;
Joined with his sacramental bread and wine
Were martyr-bones pluck'd from the lion's jaw ;
The widow's mites were ranged in honour'd line
With gifts which did a nation's plaudits draw ;
And many a tarnished trifle saw I shine
More bright than polished gold, by Heaven's appoint-
ment,
When Penitence thereon and Pardon dropt their
ointment.

XXII.

“Alas !” said I, to him who me had brought
Into this wondrous place ; “alas ! not now
In all the earth are such achievements wrought ;
In the vile dust of Mammon’s feet men bow ;
Greatness is gone, the smile of God unsought ;
A wither’d chaplet sits on Honour’s brow ;
Idly thy hosts on the bleak earth are standing ;
And nevermore thy crowded fane will need expanding !”

XXIII.

He answered with a smile : “Nay, friend, not so !
Nobly the fruitful world supplies my store
With deeds which were not garner’d long ago ;
Men deeper feel each other’s rankling sore ;
More freely let their swift compassions flow
Than ever they did let or feel before ;—
With these the thronging angels fill my mansion,
Unwall’d, and unexplored, and vast beyond expansion !

XXIV.

“In chief they are the offerings of the poor,
From sweat of brow and scanty wage,” said he ;
“The mead of woe love brings but cannot cure ;
The timid, weak, contemptible, who dree
Their hard life out in tasks and dens obscure ;
The fetter’d slave whose patient soul is free :—
But all ranks yield wherewith my sons are laden :
Priest, soldier, shepherd, clown, wife, widow, youth,
and maiden.”

XXV.

So spake my Guide, it made my poor heart melt ;
Long time I stood before him dazed and dumb ;
I only half remember what I felt ;
Even now thought craves for speech that will not
come ;
I know that like a broken reed I knelt,
Whilst life sank dwindling to a distant hum
Which in my faint ears still more faintly linger'd,
Before the brave things told of what the angels finger'd !

XXVI.

He touched me gently, raised me to my feet ;
He spoke of stranger things for eye and ear
A thousand-fold, which would my spirit greet
Could I but safely see or bear to hear.
He drew a curtain —lo ! a squalid street
Which seemed both far away and yet quite near,
With reeking crowds and wet grime covered thickly,
And there a little maiden, ill-clad, lean, and sickly.

XXVII.

She carried in her arms a loaf of bread ;
And I could follow her, I knew not how,
Into her home, where, on a wretched bed,
Her mother lay a-dying, on whose brow
The new Apocalyptic Name I read.
“But whence,” said I, for they were wafting now
Incessantly, “these gusts of choral singing
Which this poor scene, like Heaven’s own Eolus, is
bringing?”

XXVIII.

“No anthem this which voice or harp can raise ;
It comes,” said he, “from being simply good ;
Kind thoughts, on earth unheard, ascend like praise—
In my domain they’re Music’s daily food:
List how that little maiden’s thoughtful ways,
And for her child what that poor mother would,
Compose a song, in humblest human dwelling,
Which round the crystal spheres is kept for ever
swelling !”

XXIX.

One more and still another veil he drew :—
A minister sat brooding in his chair ;
Oh, that his not-too patient flock but knew
What strong clear harmonies were rising there
From self-rebukes, from high thoughts pure and true,
From agonies of inwrought secret prayer !
Him too I saw the pulpit steps ascending ;
I heard his footfall sing, with angel anthems blending.

XXX.

A fair young wife of six months old or so,
Richly attired, with softly-slippered feet,
Stood gazing on the flowery lawn below ;
What said her lips my pen may not repeat ;
How ran her secret thoughts I do not know,
But from her breast a music rose more sweet
Than ever came by proudest Art’s achieving,
Nor did she know what strains her gentle soul were
leaving.

XXXI.

What more, surpassing thought, to me disclosed,
 No language can, or else I dare not tell,
 Lest Truth itself, to overstrain exposed,
 Might lose its placid temper and rebel.
 But this I must : My guide at length proposed
 We two should tread a path not known so well ;
 Not far, he said, but yet beyond the portal
 Where Time's dwarf tent is pitched beneath the Dome
 immortal.

XXXII.

I felt his hand touch mine—away we flew :
 More swift than lightning is to Arab steed
 Did we outstrip what light itself could do,
 Or yet had done, since when it first gave heed
 To God's command, and its own being knew ;
 More swift by far we flew than Thought's own
 speed—
 One moment, by I know not what assistance,
 Brought us where yet no flash had reached of man's
 existence.

XXXIII.

Back thro' the dim Eternal did I look :
 I saw the earth a void and formless mass ;
 On lines of light, as in a printed book,
 I saw the story as it came to pass
 Of man's brief bliss, in that green-mantled nook
 Girt by the four clear streams, until, alas !
 Unblemished love broke up its dear duality ;
 Keenly I scann'd the bare, the unabridged reality.

XXXIV.

On, on, the tragic eras came and pass'd ;
I saw the dove's white wing across the dark
Gleaming, like hope on Ruin's visage cast,
When she in fluttering fear re-sought the Ark ;
The sparks of dying Sodom to the last ;
Sennacherib's host before me stiff and stark ;
That day the Tempter once again dissembled ;
And that wherein woe-stricken Nature moan'd and
trembled.

XXXV.

I saw, but guided how I could not tell,
The peopled earth ere History begins ;
Long lines of unknown Empires rose and fell,
'Mid well-known pleasures weltering, and sins ;
The Roman galleys lifted on the swell
Close by our shores where, in their painted skins,
Our fathers met proud Cæsar with defiance ;
I saw the birth of Art, the growth of deep-brow'd
Science.

XXXVI.

"But," said my Guide, "for things of marvel seen,
List thou for equal marvels not yet heard."
I held my ear attent as eye had been ;
The treasured air pour'd out its meet reward ;
I heard old Homer sing ; the Egyptian Queen
Bewail her Antony ; the royal bard
Of Israel ; the voice that cried repentance ;
And His in whose mild tones false Judas heard his
sentence.

XXXVII.

I heard Demosthenes upon the beach
Meet undismayed the ocean's deafening roar ;
The soft low sigh of tremulous yearning speech
Made by the Publican at Mercy's door ;
Our modern Abraham for the poor slave preach
Straight words of simple strength unknown before ;
Horse-hoofs and chariot wheels of Pharoah clattering ;
Belshazzar's knees, his very teeth, I heard them
chattering !

XXXVIII.

I marvelled that it did not sound more strange,
All seemed so simple, natural and true ;
I learned that God, in human life's full range,
Nought left unwitnessed by those faithful Two,
And in their store-house kept from loss or change
Until the solemn Judgment's last review :
The nimble Air, the clear-eyed Light omniscient,--
These for the mighty task begot, and all-sufficient.

XXXIX.

Harsh noises clogg'd my ear and pierced my soul,
But whence they rose I may not now reveal ;
Words came that burned me like a living coal,
And some just warm enough to help and heal.
Oh, happy they in Truth's benign control
Whose unveil'd hearts have nothing to conceal !
Not theirs to be by whispered things confounded,
When these on house-Tops of the Light and Wind are
sounded !

XL.

I heard the wailing of my own birthday ;

I knew these sins of youth to be my own ;
Along my life's whole melancholy way

Were evils I had done, but had not known ;
And one dread Voice of threatening heard I say :

"No mercy give, for none himself hath shewn."
I sank like lead.—I woke up muttering "Saviour !"
Friends told how mark'd my sleep had been by strange
behaviour.

THE ENDRICK.

The swallow's light wing lightly dips,
 And willows cool their finger-tips,
 Fresh lilies hang, with scented lips,
 In thy waters, winding lonely,
 Bonnie Endrick ! peaceful river,
 Winding in my soul for ever !

So fair beside no stream that flows
 The birk waves and the hawthorn blows,
 The rowan and the milk-white rose,—
 By thy waters, winding lonely,
 Bonnie Endrick ! peaceful river,
 Whispering in my soul for ever !

The music of my bridal day,
 How soon in death it passed away !
 Brief, bright as Eden was her stay
 Near thy waters, winding lonely,
 Bonnie Endrick ! peaceful river,
 Glimmering in my soul for ever !

Oh could'st thou backward flow, and bring
 What happy moments heard her sing,
 What rapture in her laugh would ring
 O'er thy waters, winding lonely,
 Bonnie Endrick ! peaceful river,
 Echoing in my soul for ever !

She trod thy banks, she cull'd the flower,
Charming the weary care-worn hour,
In many a dim green-mantled bower,
 By thy waters, winding lonely,
Bonnie Endrick ! peaceful river,
In my soul embower'd for ever !

Oh stay not, or his heart will break
That woos thee, yon impatient Lake !
Alas ! the salt rain, for her sake,
 In thy waters, winding lonely,
Bonnie Endrick ! peaceful river,
Rippling in my soul for ever !

Till thou shalt weep thy fountains dry,
Nor heave thine immemorial sigh,
Shall Sorrow's tide bedim the eye
 To thy waters, winding lonely,
Bonnie Endrick ! peaceful river,
Sorrowing in my soul for ever !

Thy flood shall cease ; yon ancient height
Its *Black Wing* fold from mortal sight ;
But the fair vision of delight
 By thy waters, winding lonely,
Bonnie Endrick ! peaceful river,
Still shall haunt my soul for ever !

ODE

*Addressed to the Last Remnant of an Old Shoe in the
Bottom of the River, near Auchencruive House.*

In Ayr's deep rocky bed I found thee,
Snapt every tie erstwhile that bound thee,
And of thy kindred none stood round thee,
Poor old sole !

By many a torrent sadly shaken,
Bare to the scorching sun and baken,
Outcast, unpitied, scorn'd, forsaken,
Poor old sole !

This stream shall leave its ancient groove,
Rock Ailsa roll to Auchencruive,
Ere thou thy former comforts prove,
Poor old sole !—

What palace floors have known thy tread,
On what far hills the beast was fed
In whose tough hide thy strength was bred,
Poor old sole !

Christian or pagan, where is he
Who whack'd, and rack'd, and wallop'd thee
As in a vice, between each knee,
Poor old sole ?

Gone, gone long since to his account,
By sulphur pit and Dead Sea fount,
Or homeward bound by Pisgah's mount,
Poor old sole !

Some lassie's fate on thee suspended,
Where mirth rose as it ne'er had ended ;
What funerals hast thou attended,
Poor old sole ?

Worn to a shadow by the weather,
Come, slake thy thirst and rax thy leather ;
Thou'st held what hero's toes together,
Poor old sole ?

Long since served thou the patriot's turn ?
Perchance the Bruce of Bannockburn,
Or Wallace when the foe he'd spurn,
Poor old sole ?

Who knows, it was the rustic Muse
Wore thee in transport or "the blues ?"—
Mayhap thou stood'st in Robin's shoes,
Poor old sole !

Cast off to some auld tinker body,
Ramshackle, like thyself, and duddy,
On-draggling with a cart and cuddy,
Poor old sole !

Whoever owned thee, saint or sinner,
At Life's scant feast he ate his dinner,
And then grew thin, like thee, and thinner,
Poor old sole !

Like thee, a patch of rag and rust,
We rise a wee bit from the dust,
Then to the dirt again we must,
Poor old sole !

So perish we,—no need for squallin'
E'en though the Doom's-day bell be callin',—
The scene is closed ; the mighty fallen,
Poor old sole !

DID I DREAM ?

(Sequel to the song "O'er the moor I wandered lonely.")

Did I dream we wandered lonely ?
 Ochon-a-rie, my heart is sore ;
 Favoured hour in frowning weather
 When alone we walked together
 By the sad sea's murmuring shore ;—
 All I knew—thy presence only ;
 Ochon-a-rie, my heart is sore ;
 Kindly thoughts, alas ! unspoken,
 Secrets of the heart unbroken,
 Sealed and silent evermore.

Brighter hour may Hope be sending—
 Ochon-a-rie, my heart is sore ;
 Fairer fields and fresh for ever
 By the wimpling winding river,
 On some other happier shore ;—
 Loving eyes and voices blending,—
 Ochon-a-rie, my heart is sore ;
 Loving lips not now withholden,
 Hearts unsealed and hands enfolden,
 And the parting—nevermore !

MISUNDERSTOOD.

Her heart had true love but it could not speak,
Except in tones of crimson on her cheek ;
The beauty of a bright surprise there lay,
Like winter sunset,—cold, and far away.

He lost not faith, and yet was doubting still ;
He knew the good, and yet suspected ill ;
Dumb love he scourged with thunderbolts of blame,—
She sealed her lips more firmly by the flame.

With love's warm breath and golden mouth he pled,—
What spake she but a statue might have said ?
A thousand were the voices in her brain,—
Oh had there been but one to sooth his pain !

It came not ;—for she smothered all her sighs,
And marvelled at the deafness of his eyes ;
The heart's best word of music could be seen,
Not heard, thought she. Ah then, what might have
been !

AN AUTUMNAL MONODY.

"Il Penseroso."

With tottering step he left the street,
 No friendly hand to guide him :
 He sat down on the garden seat,
 I sat me down beside him ;
 His bloodless lips were fain to speak,
 And all a-down his withered cheek
 The tears would fain have wandered ;
 I saw his eyes were all a-swim,
 The drops kept quivering on the brim ;
 And thus he maundered :

My race is run, and I have miss'd the prize ;
 Belated hope may come, but brings no cheer ;
 What boots the plainest path to blinded eyes ?
 Or loveliest music to the deafened ear ?

For me, grown old, there is the closing door
 Where friendship gave and found a resting-place ;
 For me, alas ! the genial host no more
 Bids welcome with both hands and shining face.

Not thus they scorn'd me when, in days gone by,
 With all the pride a witless youth could yield,
 I sowed, beneath bland showers and fervid sky,
 The promise of an unblest'd harvest field.

They loved me then ; and if, for one brief day,
It chanced I did not warm me at their fire,
They thought me cold, and chid my long delay,
Nor noon nor night would of my babblings tire.

For me the banquet blazed, the table groaned,
The red wine flowed, the silver goblet rang,
The mirth flew round, while Music sat enthroned,
And all Joy's flowery daughters danced and sang.

But now the heavy unrelenting years
Lean hard upon me when I pant for peace ;
Love is an echoing sorrow in mine ears—
Would that it might, but no ! it will not cease.

The friendships all are gone, when o'er my blame
The grey beard Wisdom, like a mourner, stands ;
And when my Faults in misery and shame
Sit in their lonely cells and wring their hands.

Whispers of hope, and dews of healing balm
Might fall from me on hearts distraught with pain,
So dearly have I bought the heavenly calm
Which comes, as on the mown grass gentle rain ;

Were I not old !—my sin of sins is this ;
My venial trespass, not to be forgiven ;
And those who once were quarrelling for my kiss
Draw off in fear, as from a leper driven.

Not yet was theirs the rude untender age
When youth can break all pleasure but its own ;
Mocking the pain it sweetly might assuage,
Trampling on life's gay flowers when overblown.

Whilst they were children, they and I were friends ;
But now their own are prattling on their knees ;
Nor would I mourn what prudent Nature sends—
The love withdrawn from me, and granted these.

The former days, perchance, may come once more—
Affection come on Time's receding wave ;
Small hands grasp mine more kindly than before,
And homeward lead me to a peaceful grave.

It may be so—as I have often read,
God finds the fathers failing in His hand ;
With these no more contented, in their stead
He makes "the children princes in the land."

It may be so ;—the children's children may
A brighter hope and mellower music bring
Than that which in their sires has passed away,
And left me here in silent sorrowing.

But Memory fails where Hope can bring no cure :
As Alpine herds hear not their tinkling bell,
So had I ceased remembering I was poor,
Because, alas ! I knew it all too well !

Poor, old, unsightly as a wasted wreath
In winter-blown decay upon the tomb ;
Well-nigh as helpless as the bones beneath ;
In woe rent-free, and bless'd with ample room.

No wealth is mine to draw the mourner's tear
When I am dying, Fortune's favour'd child ;
To soothe my friends when they surround my bier,
And make them to their sad fate reconciled.

But Heaven is kind, and there are richer stores
Than that proud temple of the flesh can hold,
Where harsh unsleeping angels guard the doors,
With gleaming wings of silver and of gold !

I am content, because my soul is free ;
Fair-featured Nature fills my ravished eye ;
Kindly she speaks, and coyly smiles on me
Like love-struck maid when her betroth'd is nigh.

So, not unpleased, would I unwind my strength,
Devout and thankful, at the close of day :
Watching the autumn leaves, until, at length,
Softly like them I fall, and pass away.

Thus far he spoke, with many a sigh,
A silvery brightness in his eye ;
He rose e'er I could bid him stay,
And like a spent ghost passed away.

That night in dreams I saw his face,
Asleep in its last resting-place—
Two angels guarding head and feet ;
A pauper's coffin kept him hid,
One shining hand the screws undid,
I saw another lift the lid—
His rest seemed sweet.

JOHN HOWIE, LOCHGOIN,

AUTHOR OF "SCOTS WORTHIES."

*(Inscribed to A. B. Todd, Esq.,
Secretary to the Howie Monument Committee.)*

Nobly he said what yet must needs be sung ;
A Voice uplift in the lone wilderness,
Whom ever we must proudly claim not less
Than they whose names dwelt dearly on his tongue,
And on his page are like the stars outhung
In the all-during firmament : we bless
Both him and them, who bore so well the stress,
Nor grudg'd that soul and sinew should be wrung
For God and Freedom. Well done, moorland scribe!
Thou stout-brain'd son of a most strenuous race !
And, worthier still of thee, oh, may thy tribe
Keep these ancestral moors, and guard the place
Where crumbling stone proclaims on shifting sod
Thy name indelible in heart of man and God !

THE UNKNOWN.

Here's to the lass, the bonnie lass,
 I ne'er may see again ;
 She thrill'd me, as I saw her pass,
 With pleasure and with pain ;—
 No smile, no word from her fair lips
 Was glinted or was spoken ;
 The radiant face, the liquid eye,
 Were all I had for token.

Yet never sun the morn has cheer'd
 With more entrancing beams ;
 A lovelier image ne'er appeared
 In any angel's dreams ;—
 Love, Truth, and royal Peace were there,
 With meek-eyed Resignation ;
 She came upon me like a breath
 Of holy inspiration !

One glance ; and had I ventured more
 I had been stricken blind,
 So lustrous was the charm she wore
 To dazzled eye and mind ;—
 And for the ear a rhythmic flow
 Mellifluent was blended,
 As tho' an unseen seraph choir
 Upon her steps attended.

Sweet lass ! I know not what her name,
Nor what her lot may be ;
But since I've seen her, not the same
Is this sad world to me.
The flowery Spring, the linnet's song
Cease not for all its badness,
And one pure maiden-soul may touch
The whole round globe with gladness !

COMFORT FOR THE BEREAVED.

In Memory of John Webster Smith.

You mourn for me, and think me far away,
But I am near you as the air you breathe ;
As glides into your room the light of day
So glide I in to your sad souls—to stay.
My home is not above, nor yours beneath,
For we are all more lovingly united ;
I know 'tis true, but understand it not,
Our hopes bloom best when we esteem them blighted.
I dwell with you until I am forgot ;—
Forgot ! you answer with a flood of tears,—
To me they are most beautiful, I see
The promise there of peace for coming years,—
The richer Christ that is, and is to be,
All for my sake, because you mourn for me !

FROM THE GREEK.

PRIDE.

A proud little gnat,
One summer morn,
For a moment sat
On a bullock's horn.

"Oh friend !" quoth she,
"Am I heavy, pray ?
If I weary thee,
I will go away."

"Pooh ! you need not go,"
Said he of the stall ;
"For I did not know
You were there at all !"

So little souls flare
In their own vain eyes ;
But are neither here nor there
To the great and wise.

FROM THE GREEK.

ENVY.

In a field one day,
While near to a bog,
An ox crossed the way
Of a haughty frog.

Sore vex'd and surpris'd
Was the frog to see
That a beast bigger-sized
Than herself could be.

So in a great flum,
She drew her breath in,
Till tight as a drum
Was her wrinkled skin.

To her offspring near :
“ I'm as big as he,—
You cubs ! do you here,
Am I not ? ” said she.

“ Lor', mother ! ” said they,
“ You're big as a hill ;
But blow, blow away,—
He is bigger still.”

In rage unsurpassed
A great gasp she drew ;
But this was her last,
For she burst in two.

And her cubs, poor things !
Thro' their tears learnt then
What grief envy brings
On froggies and*men.

CHORUS, FROM EURIPIDES. (IPH. IN AUL.)

O'er the strait from where alone
 Stands the town I call my own,
 Chalcis, guardian of the spring,
 The waters by the sea that sing
 Of Arethusa, dear to Fame,
 To the sandy shore I came
 Of Aulis by the sea,—
 Euripean billows dashing thro'
 The gather'd Grecian arms to view,
 To the sandy shore I came
 Of Aulis by the sea,—
 The galleys by the plashing oar
 The hero-gods of Greece that bore,
 And lash'd with leaping waves the shore
 Of Aulis by the sea.

Borne in a thousand ships of pine
 Against the treacherous Trojan line,
 The heroes whom our mates declare
 Young Men'laus with the golden hair,
 And Agamemnon, kingly bred,
 For Helen, loved and lost, have led ;
 Fair Helen whom the herdsman gay,
 The Trojan Paris, bore away
 From reed-o'erspread Eurotas' wave,
 The gift the vaunting Venus gave
 When by the fountain's dancing dew
 She sought the prize, and won it too,—

With stern Minerva stoutly strove
And with the lynx-eyed Queen of Jove,
Fast thro' the Artemesian grove,
With crowded victims reeking red,
(That flushed with shame my youthful cheek)
Spurring my quickening course I sped,
For ardent hope urged on to seek
Where meeting warriors filled the field
With clangings of the battered shield ;
Where whitely the war-teeming train
Of tented Greece bestrewed the plain,
And pranced the troops of snorting steeds,
Proud partners of their masters' deeds.

But armless and at ease reclined
The Locrian cheiftain there I find
The doughty draft-board bending o'er
With Ajax from the Cycrian shore,
The statelier Ajax, boasted son
Of Salamis and Telamon.

I mark'd Protesilaus, and there
Saw whom Poseidon's daughter bare,
Eubœan Palamedes too,
The same inglorious war pursue ;
Saw Di'med, like a play-bent boy,
The pleasures of the disk enjoy
With Mars-begot Merione,
Fairest of mortal men is he ;
And there Ulysses, deep in wiles,
From the rough mountains of the isles ;

And Nireus from the Noxian coast,
The fairest of the Grecian host.
And lo ! along the pebbly shore,
The while his heavy arms he wore,
I saw the chief whom Thetis bore
And Chiron trained, in the race
Urging his storm-outstripping pace ;
Swift as a glance he swept the shore
And with his feet the contest bore
Against a chariot's horses four,
Fleeter than whom ne'er scour'd the plain,
Nor comelier knew the conquering rein,
Nor braver shook the shuddering mane,—
White spotted o'er the central two,
Join'd in the yoke, the chariot drew,
Whilst by their sides each dappled bay—
Its course diverging, glad to find
By the loose traces less confin'd—
Held thro' the windings of the way ;
The foam flew from their bits of gold,
And widely o'er the trembling wold
Thunder'd their iron hoofs ;—nor less I hear
Pheres, the frantic charioteer,
As, urging still their wild career,
To his brave steeds he lustier cried,
And the fierce lash more fiercely plied.
On foot, and with war-sheath'd limb,
Close by the chariot's bended rim,
By the swift steeds that rivall'd him,
The fleet Achilles ran.

AN AYRSHIRE TRAGEDY.

In Memoriam, J. W. D., August 11, 1892.

On Lendalfoot the summer sea
 Flowed with mellifluent sound ;
 And many a lark's unfettered glee
 Fell rippling to the ground.

Such joy there was in waving field,
 On rock and yellow shore,
 As Nature's kindest mood can yield ;—
 Nor heart could wish for more.

O Ailsa ! lonely witness thou
 Of many a tragic woe,
 When crooked lightnings wreathed thy brow,
 And tempests raged below.

To you, ye Arran hills and vales,
 In sun and shade so fair,
 How often have the wandering gales
 Brought moanings of despair

Goatfell ! how oft, in feudal days,
 From yonder Carrick sands,
 To thee the dying bent their gaze,
 And vainly stretched their hands !

But never Fear more held her breath,
Nor deeper pang was wrung,
Than when that day 'twixt life and death
The trembling balance hung.

Dear youth, a father's, mother's pride,
Their ever-fresh delight,
Who sank beneath the smiling tide
In their bewildered sight ;

And almost on the hapless boy
Might they have laid their hand !
Ah then ! what sweet-voiced waves of joy
Had cheered that mournful strand !

For ever had it worn a crown
Of richest green and gold,
The sod whereon they laid him down .
All stony-still and cold.

No sadder blight on Hope's young flower
Could Misery contrive ;
'Twas more than death to see that hour,—
To see it, and survive.

But sure in God lie deeper things
Than that deceitful wave ;
And there are strong aspiring wings
For gentle souls and brave.

Eternal Life ! Thou hast thy shrine
Where our poor wreckage lies ;
And fathomless the peace divine
In tears of mourners' eyes.

IN MEMORIAM:

W. P. PATON.

Now that the Vision like a dream is fled,
Not hard it is the Grecian god to trace
In stalwart frame, and in his blythesome face,
In manly stride, free step, the high-swung head,
The eye unconscious of the love it shed,
The agile arm, the lip suffused with grace,
The noble breadth that found fit dwelling-place
In soul and shoulder. But, alas ! he's dead.
So lusty Spring not seldom have we seen
By one bleak night droop to untimely grave—
The laughing hopes that glinted on the green
Gone at a glance, as he beneath the wave !
Yet Spring ne'er was that vainly spent her breath,
Nor ever harvest-home so bountiful as Death !

AN OLD BALFRON WORTHY:

MICHAEL ROBERTSON, BANKER.

'Twas his at last the silent stream to cross,
 And leave the murmuring haunts of living men ;
 The strath that knew him well now mourns his loss,
 And never more will see his like again.

Like a rare mansion of the olden time
 That some forgotten art hath richly graced,
 Crumbling at length beneath our wintry clime,
 It may be lost and mourned, but not replaced.

New men will come, grow old, and quickly go,
 As they have done through countless ages past ;
 Old Endrick to the Queen of Lakes will flow,
 And the Black Wing its ancient shadow cast ;

The kine in fields, the wildfowl on the wold,
 Where the glad fairies ring the heather bells ;
 The splendour of the upland green and gold,
 Where stand the soft feet of the Fintry Fells ;

The tiny ones that cluster at the well,
 The rush of happy children from the school ;
 The rumour when the storm begins to swell,
 And showers of brown leaves fall upon the pool ;

The slow-paced funeral on the village brae,
The solemn eyes that watch from every door,—
The last look downward, and the falling clay,—
The hope to meet again to part no more ;

The rapture when the swain has found his mate,
And social mirth leaps unrestrained and wild ;
The calmer joy within the cottage-gate
When the fond mother first beholds her child ;

The plough, the furrow that it leaves behind,
The braird that Heaven doth never fail to send ;
The food God brings for beast and human kind,—
The poor who find in Him a helpful Friend ;

The quiet Sabbath morn, the sober face,
The decent dress, the common House of Prayer,
The talk outside, the awe within the place
When all in unity have gathered there ;

The week-day when the toiler brings his gain,
With sweat and summer-dust upon his cheek,—
Or takes his last mite homeward through the rain,
With a proud grief that will not deign to speak ; —

These scenes that met the old man in his way,
Engaged his kindly heart and searching eyes,
Still haunt the same old village of to-day,
And will while unborn generations rise ;—

But never, in the days that are to be,
The same old type of true man will be found,—
Till winding stream roll upward from the sea,
And pine-clad mountain sink into the ground !

The light of chivalry and old romance
Had not departed from his honoured brow ;
An angel in his hospitable glance
Well known in Abraham's time, forgotten now.

He was as courteous as the knights of old,
And softly gave the stroke that needs must fall ;
His wit was keen, but it was never cold,
And a rich humour sparkled in it all.

Gracious and affable, dignified and wise,
None could so well the churlish soul beguile ;
He pierced the quick, and the hot blood would rise,
Yet those who felt the pain were forced to smile.

Zealous for God, and for his country's weal,
For conscience, truth, and sacred liberty ;
For Church and State his heart's wish true and leal
That both be guided from above, and free !

The children by the roadside in their play
Will miss the accustomed hand upon their hair ;
And from the church he loved has passed away
The benediction of his presence there.

The worship of his pious fathers bore
Its joyous fruit within his heart again ;
And what he craved himself at Mercy's door
He gave with liberal hand to other men.

Nor did this "old disciple" ever cease
To give of Mnason's piety the proof,
For many a weary messenger of peace
Found refuge and repose beneath his roof.

No guest will e'er forget the genial feast
Prepared of God for body, heart, and mind,—
How the talk brightened, and the joy increased,
While rarest wit and richest grace combined !

Farewell ! kind friend, last of a goodly race !
Strath-Endrick holds not thee, but holds thy grave ;
Thy memory long shall haunt thy native place ;
Thy rest is with the blessed and the brave !

DR. JOHN BROWN :

AUTHOR OF "RAB AND HIS FRIENDS."

No shining morn but hastens to its ending,
 Nor sparking dew but seeks too soon the sky ;
 Half unperceived upon our steps attending
 The wise men hurry on and pass us by ;
 We know not what the good are till they die,
 Nor know the prophet-soul whom God is sending,
 Till, like the sailor's bride in tears upon the shore,
 Waving her last adieu, we see him nevermore.

Brightest of all the goodly race before him,
 Of all his worthy sires most worthy he,
 Whom Genius loved, and cast her mantle o'er him,
 Whom from a child Faith nurtured on her knee.
 Pure Wisdom, Wit, and (richest of the three)
 Kind Humour, everywhere on earth deplore him—
 Gentle, devout John Brown, droll wizard of the pen,
 The son of mirth and tears, the friend of dogs and men!

For thee the thankful heart and voice of weeping,
 Thou Queen of cities ! that he loved so well ;
 For never one, fair-curtain'd 'neath thy keeping,
 A sadder, sweeter, merrier tale could tell,
 Or wield more deft than he the wizard spell,
 Who on thy bosom nourished, now is sleeping
 Upon the rocky steeps that guard thy glorious throne,
 Waiting the envious world to claim him for its own !

He walked life's way like shadow softly stealing,
With the glad Muses ever hovering by,
The shyest of their secret things revealing,
Whilst he, their loved interpreter, was nigh
With mystic pen and seer's far-piercing eye,
Deep in his heart the subtle craft concealing
Of serving sacred Truth with Fancy's drollest wiles,
Melting the soul to tears, and turning these to smiles.

O rare old man ! to whom so much beholden,
Our hearts refuse to rank thee with the dead :
Still break the truth, the beautiful, the golden,
And when thou speakest naught else need be said !
Not one bright beam of thy dear face hath fled,
Nor will have fled when these our times are olden,—
Homely and sober face, benevolent and sage,
Comely and silver-crowned with three times honoured
age.

Laid in the tomb—not dead, but death-defying ;
Fount of perennial pathos, tender, true,—
A mother's pathos when her babe is dying ;—
Brief as the light'ning, and as brilliant too ;
His work immortal tho' his words were few.
Go, Fame ! and kiss the sod where he is lying—
Genial, devout John Brown, whom human hearts revere
Till Mirth no more can smile, nor Sorrow shed a tear !

GEORGE ELIOT.

“ Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him,
because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not.”

Teacher she was of frail and erring men
Whom but the wise could love and understand ;
And made the magic touch of woman's pen,
The riches of her gentle heart and hand,
Well-known from age to age, from land to land :
Her like the world ne'er saw, nor hopes to see again !

Helper so strong, so tender, and so true,
She must have hearkened at the Master's feet,
And sat, perchance, more nearly than she knew
In shadow of His truth-girt mercy-seat—
And what she learned He taught her to repeat,
And whom the kindly Wisdom called she gently drew.

Prophet who spoke, by heaven and earth inspired,
What both did feel but found it hard to say—
With love divine and human passion fired—
And said it in the brightest, kindest way :
So man, henceforth, will go less far astray :
The sweetest of his sins will now be less desired.

Well done, kind spirit ! hail, all hail to thee !
The ages welcome and revere thy name ;
Lo ! millions wait thy touch to set them free
From the sore thralldom and the bitter shame :
Go, teach them whom to praise, and what to blame ;
What Christ was like, and what the Judgment Day will be.

ALEXANDER MACLEOD, D.D.

["Not many days ago, talking of his death, he said he would not care to be placed in a shroud, and expressed his wish that his body should be wrapped in his plaid like an old Highland soldier."]

No martial chief, in old romantic days,
 Whose soul the rugged hills and foaming streams,
 Dark storms and tender flowers, ancestral faith
 And valorous deeds had nurtur'd, till at length,
 Not grudgingly, he gave to weary age
 And death his wealth of undishonoured scars,
 Was ever, when the last cold stillness came,
 Wrapt in his plaid (companion of his toils
 And of his welcome rest), more worthily
 Than thou in thine, True Man ! to whom high aims,
 The royal strength that rules in gentleness,
 And all things fair and bright, kindly and brave,
 Were native-born as sunbeams are to summer !
 Farewell, most dear of friends, more true than steel !
 Soldiers of Jesus ! whose unyielding sword
 Death wreathes in victory and eternal peace,—
 We mourn in tears whilst thou art shedding smiles
 Amidst the children who in evil ways
 By thee, Great Heart ! into the Fold of God
 Were safely shepherded. Farewell ! Farewell !

WILLIAM HOWIE WYLIE.

Heroic Friend, strong, strenuous, and brave,
 Whom hard and honest labour best could please,
 No rest is thine, for rest thou did'st not crave,
 Nor placid Heaven of soft indulgent ease.

The stern unsmiling task awaits thee still,
 Eager undaunted wrestlings of the soul,
 The heart-throes, and the stress of thought and will,
 Which ardent love can raise but not control.

The joy be thine that brightened boyhood's dream,
 Green fields, and flowers, and hosts of murmuring
 bees ;
 The limpid laughter of the mountain stream ;
 Unwithering groves of scented hawthorn trees !

For still, perchance, within thy spirit's home,
 Old scenes not lost are like thyself renewed ;
 And there are meads where herds contented roam ;
 And there are vistas glinting thro' the wood ;

And there are cheerful dawns of the day ;
 And there are musings meek at evenfall ;
 And there are skies not warm but cold and grey ;
 And there are captive souls to disenthral !

Oh Friend ! be thine the hero's Godlike joy
 Proudly to strive without reward or rest,—
 To bear the cross and find it sweet employ,
 For ever struggling, and for ever blest !

ISAAC OLIVER JONES.

DIED, SEPT. 17, 1896.

I.

Like a sweet psalm when it has reached its close ;
 Like the last smile of the declining sun ;
 A Sabbath when its placid course is run ;
 A couch where weary limbs have found repose ;
 A table spread "in presence of our foes" ;
 The blessing softly breathed which leaves out none ;
 The last "Amen" which marks the service done ;
 Like mother's love that comes but never goes,—
 So thou, dear friend !—we strike no note of woe,
 For we have known thee ; and thyself so good,
 Our loss in losing thee we hardly know,—
 We are like hunger when refreshed with food ;
 Our souls, like thine, in peace, and satisfied ;
 Thou lived'st so well, we feel thou hast not died !

II.

My heart is sore, and yet well satisfied ;
 I feel the weighty stroke so lightly given ;
 Still do I drink the cup, tho' now denied ;
 The friend I mourn is beckoning me to Heaven ;
 Pierced to the quick, yet only half-way sad ;
 The pain would be past durance were it less ;

I am all sorrow for the joy I've had,
And seraph wings relieve my loneliness :
The shadow came, and yet it only seemed
My best sunlight in the contrasted ray
Which from the prophet's soft-wheel'd chariot gleam'd
While wafting him to life's more brilliant day ;—
Oh, would that mantle, as it did of old,
Fall on my filial spirit manifold !

III.

At the grave-side the Patriarch Psalm was sung ;
The silver notes from the same lips ascending
That called him Father,—in melodious blending
The tremulous joy and solemn sweetness hung,
As heavenly music may on mortal tongue,—
While snow-flake seraphs to and fro were wending
On steps of sunbeam, as they did, attending
Long since on Jacob, when his heart was young,
And night-dews fell on him,—on viewless wings,
And in their censers, wrought of mystic gold,
Each happy sprite his errand homeward brings,
Love's incense, more than thankful heart can hold ;
That two enraptured souls in Paradise
Might see and breathe their children's sacrifice !

I. J.

DIED, MARCH 21, 1895.

The silent chamber, witness of her pain
And weariness thro' many long, sad years,
Was thrill'd at last with psalms and smiling tears,
The sweetest fall of resurrection rain
That ever brought spring-flowers to earth again,—
And Death, soon as the music touched his ears,
Himself alone felt stricken by his tears,
Folded his dark wings meekly at the strain,
And stood transfigured ; for he well could trace
The harmony of love and praise and prayer
Left by a lifetime in the still calm face,
Seen at a glance, and fixed for ever there,—
Like the child's gift of lilies in her hand,
Pledge of the New Life in the Better Land !

BISHOP MOULE.

"The bishop has been out in China some thirty years, and has evidently attained to the quiet mind. He disclaimed the idea that he was a Bishop Hannington. He had not a spark of enthusiasm in him, he said. There were bishops and bishops, missionaries and missionaries : all were wanted. The great thing was to go and work where Christ sent one."—*Report of Meeting at Oxford.*

"We cannot all be friars ; and many are the ways by which God carries His own to Heaven."—*Don Quixote to Sancho.*

Not for thy long years' task alone,
 Good bishop, from my heart I love thee ;
 But for the weakness thou dost own
 In meddling not with things above thee.

Not thine the swift unsparing zeal,
 Enthusiastic, fierce and fiery ;
 Nor thine what noble spirits feel
 When duty's path is hard and briery.

Mayhap thy toil of thrice ten years,
 With but an honest heart upholden,
 No strain of nerve, no bursts of tears,
 Needed to make it pure and golden.

In God's great benison of good
 There is a gift of dulness given ;
 And when it worketh all it could,
 It findeth welcome back to Heaven.

Souls quiet, unimpassioned, slow,
God bringeth to His royal city,
Not by the path the martyrs go,
Blood-stained, and drenched with tears of pity.

Some do not know the grass is green,
They only know that wrongs need righting ;
And some the stars have never seen,
So rapt are they with striving, fighting.

Some never rest and never tire ;
Some are who cannot work for thinking ;—
Can God who feeds the soul on fire,
Forsake when it is merely sinking ?

Kind Heaven reserves a quiet place
For plain and unaspiring people,
Who run but never win the race,—
God loves the church not for the steeple.

Bright honour be to those who shine,
The all-enduring soldier, stoic ;
Good bishop, let us not repine—
We were not born to be heroic.

So will we calmly walk our way,
And humbly do the task assigned us ;
Kind Heaven be praised ! return we may
And leave no hero's name behind us

WILLIAM PEDDIE, D.D.

*For sixty-five years Minister of Bristo Church,
Edinburgh.*

LIKE some quaint cup, by antique art designed,
Full to the brim—nor yet quite overflows—
With wine of Hebrew faith and well refined,
Which mildly in the evening sunlight glows,
Most gracefully and in old Grecian kind
His life was lived in beautiful repose ;
The noble face, the silvery voice, the mind,
All bore it, and the life's calm lingering close.
I loved as no son better did his sire—
I loved the genial, chivalrous old man ;
With more than lover's self-respecting fire
Did I revere the blameless course he ran
With step so soft, and soul so undefiled,
Till Sleep took to her breast again her weary child.

A FULL-GROWN MAN.

In Memoriam: Rev. Hugh Stowell Brown.

Struck like a great oak in a day of thunder,
 When the strong arms are laid untimely low,
 Swift by the lightning sword-stroke reft asunder,
 And all the nestled songsters by the blow
 Struck too with mute and sorrow-laden wonder,
 From their loved shelter scattered to and fro,—
 Such was thy strength, such they whom it defended,
 And such the stroke of God whereby it ended,—
 Strong man of God, broad-breasted man of men,
 A Pauline-Samson to our day descended,
 As little shamed to love the joys of life
 As gird thee for the truth in manly strife,—
 Such as we prized thee, now the angels can—
 Nature's own child, and Christ's own full-grown man !

TOO LATE FOR MARTYRDOM:
OR TOO SOON.

Firm as a rock, and gentle as the dew ;
 Genial as sunshine is in April showers ;
 A child of Truth, a son of Laughter too,—
 Well-placed, not long, in this sad world of ours ;
 A brave man, tender, generous, and true ;
 As rich in charities as Summer is in flowers :
 Of others' untold ills too much he knew
 To care aught for his own, alas ! not small nor few.
 With all his heart engaged, and all his powers,
 Divinely served the neediest, and threw
 A common workman's years of service into hours :
 His martyr-blood unspilled,—he came too late ;
 Or his, perchance, the sterner, nobler fate
 Had Love but willed it so that he should wait !

SILVER WEDDING.

(TO B. AND M. S. W.)

May God who gave the silver give the gold,—
Who said long since that Love should wed with Peace,
And live thro' endless years but ne'er grow old,
In happy union bless'd with large increase ;—
The courts of Heaven were new that bridal day,
And wing'd with sunshine were the ardent hours ;
Joy laugh'd to see the cherubs at their play,
Sowing the sky with stars, the earth with flowers ;
The frame of all things felt a strange new thrill,
For Music then first drew her charming breath,
And lo ! that wedding march is marching still
Thro' hearts of sorrow and thro' halls of death ;—
In all true homes of God, beneath, above,
Love owns all peace, and nothing lives but love !

IN WEST KILBRIDE U.P. CHURCH.

Only a rustic maiden's face,
 Mingling with other means of grace,
 To-day, within the House of Prayer,
 Brought revelation to me there.
 With true apocalypse it shined,
 As sideways from the pew behind
 I saw it, and I understood,
 As ne'er before, that God is good.

No sign was there of consequence,
 But quiet, plain, unlettered sense ;
 Yet something seem'd enshrin'd within
 The sober eye and sun-brown'd skin,
 Played on the lip, enwreath'd the brow—
 I know not what, I know not how—
 Suggesting thoughts beyond the spheres,
 And wide as the eternal years.

Nor did I love or covet her,—
 I was a simple worshipper
 Of Him, who made the daisy spring,
 The brooklet dance, the laverock sing,
 And bade this face, this homely creature
 Of artless mien, and honest feature,
 By some sweet mystery of choice
 Speak to me with a prophet's voice.

She saw me not, nor could she know
The spell that swayed my spirit so,
Nor hear the soft-breath'd symphony
Her own self made and wafted me,
Like far-off music to the ear
When moonlit air hangs calm and clear—
A silent music to my gaze,
A perfect Gospel-paraphrase !

For tho' I lent no languid care
To the psalm sung and offered prayer,
Listen'd to saving truth proclaim'd,
Paid every due that could be named,
Still did she, by some sacred thrall,
Move me and bless me more than all,—
With many a vision fresh and kind
For weary heart and worried mind,—
Of Father's love, and angels' wings,
Afloat through all earth's common things ;
Of tables for the hungry spread ;
Of sweeten'd tears by mourners shed ;
Of pardon, Mercy's meek-eyed child ;
Of hearts, long alien, reconciled ;
Of suffering souls content to wait
Beneath the fires of lust and hate ;—
The whole wide world, from shore to shore,
Seem'd with compassions mantled o'er ;
All evil things were Virtue's food,
Dark shadows of approaching good,
The fruit of God, ripe underneath,
Like full corn in the blade's green sheath.

Thus did my thoughts meander on,
Till service closed, the vision gone,
The maiden passed, I know not where—
A melted cloud in vacant air :
I nevermore, perchance, to trace
The benediction of her face.

What hers may be of daily task
I know not, and I need not ask ;—
Heaven bless her in her humble cares !
While she the farmer's brose prepares,
Or mucks the byre, or binds the sheaf,
Or gives the lowing kine relief,
Churn she the butter, press the cheese,
Or ply such other tasks as these ;—
And if, as I fain hope may be,
'Neath fragrant shade of hawthorn tree,
Some kindly lad and she—not loth—
Have given and ta'en a lover's troth,—
Bless her, as in the twilight haze
She wanders on the heathery braes,
Or in some glen on brookside stone
Sits meditative—not alone ;
Or should they lift the unslipped heel
In rapturous din of social reel !

All this ungrudged, for was not she
God's priest anointed, teaching me
What holy gladness one might find
In being born of human kind ;

What psalms of peace Creation sings
In simple unintending things,—
How bless'd with beauty, and how rife
With hopes, the God-like gift of life ;
And one great truth, the last and best,
More rich by far than all the rest—
In her sweet looks I saw it shine—
The face of God is feminine !

A THOUGHT OF SYMPATHY.

O Balm ! which none but wintry blasts can bring
To breathe the health of Heaven on human woe,
Thou art too tender for the zephyr's wing,
We find thee in the sternest winds that blow—
Chill ice can make thy warm compassions flow,
Thou sweet, miraculous, death-defying thing !
Balm of dear youth when we are growing old,
When Life can see, well-pleased, her lamp burn low,
When at the brightening hearth the heart grows cold,
And with our loved ones lost we fain would go,—
O Balm of Christ ! our wounded friend behold,
Who censer-like did waft thee to and fro,
And made thee to a thousand hearts well-known,—
Breathe now thy benediction on his own !

BREEZE HILL, BOOTLE.

A Letter to a Friend in Edinburgh.

Wellnigh the summit of this gradual hill
 I please my roving eye and wanton will
 With varied scenes that lie in prospect round
 On lazy slope of slow-descending ground ;
 While from my gladsome window, gazing down,
 I view the distant sea and neighbouring town.

First, for my window-sill is broad and bare,
 I see the vulgar sparrow strutting there,
 Brisk as a would-be lord, ignobly sprung,
 Yet spruce with prideful airs and clamorous tongue.
 And often, when the ledge was laid with snow,
 Trim robin I have seen trip to and fro,
 In decent poverty, with look genteel,
 Winking a sober prayer for morning meal.

There, too, has lain the lamentable dead,
 Dropped from the starling's nest high overhead,—
 A shapeless, naked, melancholy thing,
 All innocent of downy breast and feathered wing ;
 In kindly soil we laid the limp remains—
 A long reward of rest for life's brief pains !

Beneath, a modest length of garden lies,
 With sod of welcome green for town-used eyes,
 With brown walks bordered, and with beds of flowers ;
 But neighbouring gardens vie too well with ours.

I look beyond, and see the patient fields
All waiting for the dower that Autumn yields ;
In some, long ridges, like the rippling wave,
Hold the earth-apple in its hopeful grave ;
And some that now seem desolate and cold,
Will soon be corn-lakes warm with waving gold.

I watch the hues of the chameleon soil,
And all the yearly round of labourer's toil ;
As varying task, or varying season needs
The pruning-knife, or plough with prancing steeds.

But ah ! these pleasant fields will show not long
Sweet Nature's work inwoven with her song ;
Harbour the groping mole in silent dark,
Or send, like fervent prayer, the heavenward lark ;
Hear moanings of the oxen long and deep,
Or feel the tender lips of nibbling sheep.
All this God gave, but man forbids to stay—
The builder comes, and Nature steals away.

What time begins the drone of yellow bee,
And scented snowflakes lie on hawthorn-tree,
And softening gales beneath the blinking moon
Tell us that brighter days are coming soon ;
When Love's warm law through every creature glows,
The same that moves the heart of budding rose ;
Then with the evening's gentle hour and still,
The frequent lover walks this quiet hill,
Content with aimless wand'rings to and fro,
Long silences, and whisp'ring soft and low.

Break not the golden dream, undimmed with care,
That forms new Eden for each ardent pair ;

Bring not too soon the melancholy years
Weighted with leaden griefs, and wet with tears !

See, over all the reddening plain below,
The new town rise in many a checkered row ;
The several villa, and the close-made street,
Where noisy Business toils at Leisure's feet,—
There would the pensive come—but comes no more—
To walk the green lanes and the lonely shore ;
On native hills the rabbit gaily ran,
And all the scene was peace till plagued with man !

So Time, where I expecting to behold
The mystic Summer weave her green with gold,
Will pave the soil and bring the busy throng,—
But if it must come, may it linger long !

Beyond the field, I view with well-pleased eyes
Religion's finger lifted to the skies,
The plain church spire, from ostentation free,
And nearer Heaven than aught the eye can see :
True type of ancient seer, it serves to show
Whence man has come, and where he hopes to go.

And oft the chimes, like rain on thirsty ground,
Pour down refreshing showers of cheerful sound ;
Or execrate, with crash of dreadful din,
The hated Guy for well-remembered sin.

The child of neighbouring church, wide space
between,
Stands the loud school beside the happier green,
Where, loosed from bitter yoke of book and pen,
The tiny women brawl with tiny men ;—
Myself not far, but far enough away
To lose the din and yet enjoy the play.

O'er slanting roofs and many-windowed walls,
The belfry to the busy playground calls,
And with the church points heavenward as it can,—
So tries the child to emulate the man ;
Thus by matured example in the wise
The lisping learn to speak, the low to rise.

Close by, columnal chimneys, grim and tall,
One lusty giant rising o'er them all,
Plying with fire and steam the grateful task
To draw old Adam's wine from earthen cask.

And lo ! great lids hang darkly on the right
O'er gloomy wells that hold our evening light,
Sun-substitute that cunning man has found,
Whose rays through iron pipes run underground.
Ah, man ! what canst thou see,—what canst thou know ?
God's light is from above,—thine from below !

There, too, I watch the barges come and go
On smooth canal, monotonous and slow ;
Yet sweet the liquid highway to my eye
With mirrored hues of many-tinted sky.

Oft in my walks, with sickening heart, I note
The poor lank brute-beast pull the lumbering boat,
Yet scarce can drag his limbs, or draw his breath,
Sad intermediate shadow both of life and death,—
Once played his part, perchance, in noble strife,
For this reward—these thankless dregs of life !

Beyond, I scan the varied landscape o'er
From distant lighthouse on the Crosby shore,
To Litherland and sea-washed Waterloo,
And Seaforth with its saintly church in view.

And like the white-winged spirit of the plain,
I mark the fluttering breath of frequent train
Fly o'er the land, and float upon the wind,
With roaring street of railway-cars behind.
How the heart beats, and brain distracted reels,
In modern men who rush through life on wheels !

In constant haze the leftward scene appears
Where Liverpool his thriving greatness rears,
And nearer still his brawny arm extends,
And plucks our flowers with toil-stained finger-ends.

A quarry near, of depth and width immense,
Startles the view and strikes the whirling sense,
Foul smoke ascending from the vast abyss,
Plutonic groans, demoniac shriek and hiss,
While human cries commingle in the din
Like final woe of unrepented sin.
Ah me ! what thoughts the passing stranger fill
Of other nameless regions, deeper still !

High o'er the crowding roofs in vale outspread
A mighty obelisk rears its classic head,
But holds no lustrous deeds, or patriot's name,
Proud heritage of death-defying Fame,—
Offspring of Art and Industry combined,
It bears to heaven the smoke that plagues mankind !

Through openings in the builder's broken screen
Tall masts of well-protected fleets are seen ;
And over these, beyond where, deep and wide,
Majestic Mersey rolls her surging tide,
The slopes of Wallasey and Oxton rise
With charms like some well-peopled Paradise ;

When rays of early morn the scene unfold
The land is velvet green, the mansions gold,
And on the lofty landmark where he stands
The happy windmill seems to clap his hands.

Then height o'er height, aspiring higher still,
Dim shades appear of distant Cambrian hill,
Whereon queen Mystery with magic sway
Rules o'er my idling fancy day by day.

Now from the finite land, infinite sea !
I turn with reverential eye to thee,
Last theme of my unworthy song and best,
Thou radiant zone of wide far-reaching west !
Man fears but cannot harm thee or confine,
Image of his inviolate God, and thine ;
No stain of ancient curse in human toil
Will e'er unsanctify thy virgin soil,
But pure as heaven will evermore be seen
Thy fields of blue, thy fringe of evergreen !

Full-freighted Mersey straight in front of me
Bears down her burden to the imperial sea,
Who smiles afar where she can shun the eye,
And lifts her lip to kiss the bending sky.

With naked vision, or convenient glass,
I watch the splendid panorama pass,—
Fleets taking leave the fluid earth to roam,
Or laden with the spoils returning home ;—
Strange pilgrims in the desert of the deep,
Fantastic, various as the course they keep,
Both tail of fish and wing of bird they wear,
And navigate at once both sea and air ;—

Wild ocean's Bedouins, wand'ring far and near,
White sail for hood, and mast for pointed spear.

How altered now in courage as in form
To face dread billows and defiant storm,
Since when, of old, propelled by plashing oar,
Seaward they looked with fear and hugged the shore !
Strength in their prow, and beauty at their crest,
Borne out upon the full tide's ample breast,
The great ships pass, and dwindle to the eye
Between the silver lines of sea and sky,—
So come delightful dreams before the mind,
Linger, and pass, and leave no trace behind.

Oft when the western gale has raged too long,
And fret in weary dock the windbound throng,
With breeze from friendly east to set them free,
Lo ! what a lengthened forest trails the sea !
Each noble ship, strong, beautiful, and brave,
Led by steam-tug, like despicable slave,
Till threatening shoals and crowded waters passed,
Sweet liberty and roomy sea are gained at last.

Less beautiful but greater far in strength,
In bulk immense, like very streets in length,
Giants that own grim Vulcan for their sire,
With ribs of iron and with heart of fire,
The tribes of ocean-steamers keep their way,
Winds blow their worst, and waves roll as they may !

God speed you ! bravest of your noble race,
Who meet the rude Atlantic face to face,
In wild mid-ocean, dauntlessly alone
Cope with his mighty strength and hold your own ;

Or when the awful icebergs gleam before,
Or dark fogs gather on Canadian shore.
God speed you ! 'mid the fair West Indian Isles,
Where Nature's havoc mingles with her smiles ;
Or when, with heavy toil and look forlorn,
Adrip with ice ye round the desolate Horn ;
Or lie near tropic shore in sickening glare
While pestilent vapours load the stagnant air.
Or if to ancient East your course may be,
Where cyclone wave turns land to dreadful sea ;
Or prowl Malayan hordes to kill or sell
The storm-struck mariner—God speed you well !

I watch with joy that only lovers know,
These wanderers of the deep sea come and go ;
Muse on the many-sided life they bear,
Man's all of good or evil gathered there ;—
Man's whole mixed family—some weak some strong,—
Some in good health who will be sick ere long ;
Some with the sanguine cheek and cheerful eye,
And some scarce wishful that their grief should die.
A maiden goes to make one blessed now,
Who keeps unbroken still a schoolboy's vow ;
Old age consents at last to leave the shore,
And meet a far-off son—who breathes no more.
A bridal pair on deck walk to and fro,—
An uncaught criminal retires below ;
Some are on business, some on pleasure bent,
And some go home no wiser than they went ;
Friendships are falsely made and fortunes lost
By luckless fools who count the rueful cost.

What full-phased life these floating isles contain
In hope and fear, in folly, love and pain ;
No feature lost that can be mourned or prized,—
The world is there, and man epitomized !

Thus do I mark the scene and meditate,
While fretful Ocean moans beneath her freight,—
Bearing with equal strength, but changeful mood,
The wave-worn, many-masted multitude,
On heaving breast of slowly-swelling tides,
Or when the gradual flood once more subsides.

Oft I behold the war-clad training-ships
Send thunder-cloud and lighting from their lips ;
While loyal hearts are taught with skilful hand
To strike the foe, and guard their native land ;—
Behold the fishermen on perilous waves
That yield their bread, and oftentimes their graves ;—
Or wanton pleasure-boat, with sun-tipped sail,
Smile at the rolling waves and flustering gale.

The wintry scene is infinitely grand
When foaming billows rave along the strand ;
While rapid tide and raging tempest meet,
And clouds of spray contend with clouds of sleet.
Perchance I notice then, with throbbing breast,
Some drifting ship alone and sorely pressed,
Amid the dreadful breakers rise and fall,
Or vanish in the gloom of sudden squall.

But should the tempest rage at lone midnight,
A creeping horror chills me at the sight
Where, like some lurid demon standing by,
New Brighton lighthouse rolls his bloodshot eye.

Awestruck I stand, my heart aquake with fear
Lest some ill-fated crew are struggling near,
Cling to the mast or ply the useless oar,
Or float on fragile raft and seek the shore.
Haply the gallant lifeboat hurries there,
Defies the storm and triumphs o'er despair.
Yet some, alas ! may perish in the foam
Who saw, e'er dark, and wept at sight of home !

All-radiantly the summer ocean shines
At eventide when sultry day declines,
And weary Sun bends low his burning face,
While lines of liquid glory mark the place ;
Glorious the spot his glowing cheek has pressed,
His many-curtained couch of gorgeous rest,—
Magnificent array, that well might vie
Splendours ineffable of tropic sky :
Lo ! in the royal purple's opening fold
Gleam forth deep inner shrines of dazzling gold ;
Pavilions multiform of saffron hue
Dappled with stars of empyrean blue,—
Wrought by the spirit of perpetual change
To grander glories ever new and strange.

Sometimes the clouds of awful crimson spread
Like canopy of dripping blood o'erhead,
While man and beast look on with fearful eye,
And solemn stillness reigns in earth and sky ;
But suddenly the tragic scene will cease,
And charms of beauty blend with charms of peace,
While answering blackbirds in the waning light
Warble a quiet note of sweet good-night,—

Till darkness mounts her many-spangled throne,
And holds all Nature's empire for her own.

When I retire to sleep, the vision seems
To linger in my soul in glorious dreams,
Wherein to me, all undeserved, 'tis given
To see the House of God and Gate of Heaven !

RETROSPECT.

*(Lines suggested on visiting an antique avenue of rare
beauty at Dalwick, near Peebles, September, 1892.*

The path where gods and men, once on a day,
Were fain to wander, ere their love grew cold,—
Each smiled on each, and wondrous tales were told,
The while this brook went on its rambling way,
And those old trees shook down the sun's warm ray
In flickering waves of glory manifold,—
Or Autumn shed her wrinkled leaves of gold,
Whilst plaintive winds made mournful roundelay ;—
As oft befell, in ages not so far,
When youth and maiden walked this green arcade,
Pale as the moonlight, trembling as a star,
And fearful of the bliss-born vows they made ;—
Quaint Fancy boasts of yonder old stone chair,
King Lear and sweet Cordelia rested there !

A REMINISCENCE OF CONTINENTAL
TRAVEL, MAY, 1891.

My Brothers ! we have travelled far,
Through summer scenes and wintry too ;
But no cold variance came to mar
The love that made our friendship true.

Of all God gave to charm the soul
Our brotherhood we prize not least—
The mutual trust that kept it whole,
And made it a continual feast.

We meet, it may be, not again
Till we have crossed the silent stream ;
But this glad time will haunt us then
In beauty like an angel's dream.

A thousand memories intertwine
Of glowing heart and raptured eye,
Like tendrils of the budding vine,—
To bear rich clusters by and bye.

God was our Teacher all the way,
And we were learning well or ill ;
But through life's long eternal day
We humbly must be learning still.

We worshipped at their noblest shrine
Nature below and God above,
With veneration so divine
It seemed too great to call it love.

Yet is not this, for you and me,
The best our foreign travel yields—
To know how sweet home is, and see
Once more the sward of English fields,—

The hedge-rows, and the rolling seas
Of undulating hills and vales,
Where Beauty waits in quiet ease
To float her bark and trim her sails?

Fair smiling France, the Switzer's hills,
The Rhine-land with romantic glow,
Italian lakes, Italian trills—
We scorn them not, nor rank them low :

Mountain on mountain towering high
Where never foot of man had trod,
Great stairs descending from the sky,
Stained with the pure white feet of God :

Dark forests, and the streamlet's dance,
The dizzy cliff where eagles flew,
Calm lake's poetic countenance
Wherein the heavens and earth were new :

Milk-white meandering and roar
Of torrents in their rocky home ;
Broad river on its broken floor
Surging in hills of dazzling foam :

The crag, the awful depth below,
The bridge so tremulous and slim ;
Sweet peasant homes in many a row,
And pendulous on the mountain's rim :

And where the avalanche dragged its way
From barren height to cultured sod,
Caught the poor children at their play
And snatched them swiftly home to God :

The grey old temples, dear to Art,
With golden altars deck'd with flowers ;
Stored with the treasures of the heart,—
Albeit, an alien faith to ours :

One step, and we forgot the street
In the cool shade where God is known,—
So still, so gloriously complete
In gleaming glass and sculptured stone !

And if, within the wide expanse,
One solitary knelt in prayer,—
It spoke the Father's kindly glance
Who numbers every straggling hair !

Were these by Superstition raised ?
Conceived in brain of sin, forsooth ?—
Then be the Prince of Evil praised,
And perish all our hopes for Truth !

Milan ! thy priestly rites to me
Are motes of dust in purest air ;
Thy Pile, whate'er thy mummeries be,
Itself is worship—God is there !

Those marble hosts, in magic rows,
Do all but heave the human breast,—
Still choir, whose anthem ever flows—
Our God is worthy of the best !

Cologne ! beneath thy stately fane
The children met in myriad throng,
Wafting in sweet angelic strain
The fragrance of their Even-song.

A sudden spell was round me cast,—
My steps were wandering soft and slow
Thro' dim lone cloisters of the past,
And mystic glades of long ago.

With tears my mother's memory came,
And, saving this, all else was dumb—
“Our Father, hallowed be Thy name,
Thy will be done, Thy kingdom come !”

My Brothers ! we have travelled far ;
May these fair scenes that charmed our sight
Still keep their lustre like a star,
When Time has darkened into night !

A BIRTHDAY ODE.

The years glide by, and over saddening Youth
Comes the chill sense that she is growing old ;
But Time can never change a heart of truth
Save but to take the tarnish from the gold ;—
Come he with fifty winters on his crest,
His gloomy wing brings but a harmless guest,—
No flutter need arise in Virtue's breast,
For Truth is ever young, and Love is never cold.

MEMORABILIA ROMANA.

I.

THE COLOSSEUM.

Here Silence mocks for once her fair good name,
 And with an echoing wonder thrills the soul ;
 This Pile, restored, thro' all its giant frame
 Trembles, as once it did beneath the roll
 Of ebbing, flowing, thunder-like acclaim,
 As man or beast the sanguine slippery goal
 Had gained, and hard-fought wreath of fame,
 With shouts all Heaven could hear but not control ;
 Nor is the gasp unheard that comes no more,
 And sigh so faint that it can reach no ear,—
 Of him, of her who at her rustic door
 Naught can but kiss her babe and wipe the tear ;
 The cruel throng their plaudits will not stay,
 And she still keeps lone vigil night and day.

We envy thee, and oh ! we need thee still,
 Brave monk, who from the orient sped
 With silent heart, grim hope, unflinching will,
 In no imprudent haste thy blood to shed
 If but thou could'st the Master's love fulfil,
 And pluck the friend-laid sorrow from His head ;

Here crowds hung o'er thee like a threatening hill ;
In brutal rage they howled and wished thee dead ;
But when thy harmless hood swept in between,
The swords that sought each other fell on thee,
What sudden awe-struck stillness changed the scene !
Then could the stone-blind Christians clearly see
In blood of thine—the last that stained this floor—
The honour'd Cross of Him whose name they bore.

II.

THE MAMERTINE PRISON,

BENEATH THE CAPITOL, ROME,

*Whence St. Paul is supposed to have been led to
Execution.*

Be this thy pride for ever, oh fair Queen
Of countless triumphs ! this, of all the rest
Glutting thy gates with spoils from East and West,
With slaves who sceptred princes once had been,
'This captive, whom thy heedless throngs have seen,
Of all rare treasures ever yet possessed
By vaunting conqueror, the first and best,
Saving his dearest Lord, the Nazarene ;
Oh ! blush, and name it as thy single boast,
Proud Mistress of the earth, Imperial Rome !
That long time since thou wert this poor man's host,
Lent him his honoured chain and latest home,
Where bread of tears the Christ and he might eat
Ungrudged, in this foul den beneath thy feet !

III.

THE EUCALYPTUS.

*Church of the Three Fountains, Roman Campagna,
Scene of St. Paul's Execution.*

Three fountains rose where fell the martyr's head,
Offspring of life from the death-breathing ground ;
Then, like a nurse who at the sufferer's bed
Kneeleth to suck the poison from the wound,
This angel Eucalyptus came, to spread
Soft wings of healing-unction all around,
Drink the foul juice the soil was wont to shed,
And bid these cloisters ring with joyful sound,
Where once the morbid face, the sunken eye,
Sepulchral cheek, dry lip, and sharpened chin
Of weary monk appall'd the passer-by ;—
Oh ! is it thus, amidst malarial sin,
The friend of Jesus bears, thro' pain and loss,
The healing tree of his un murmuring cross !

IV.

THE CATACOMBS AND ST. PETER'S.

Not now Thou livest with the dead men's bones
In temples dark and sinuous of the tomb ;
Thine is the sun-lit, loftiest, largest room,
The jewell'd altars, tribunes, golden thrones,

Showers of sweet chimes, triumphant organ tones,
The glowing fresco for sepulchral gloom,
And all the arts' bright summer-time of bloom
In pictured splendours and in sculptured stones,—
Faith of the Son of God, the Crucified !

Not now more low than Lazarus at the gate,
Thine is the purple robe,—perchance the pride,
The hollow-hearted feast and lordly state ;—
Of all save dogs forsaken, oh ! wert thou
More near to Abraham's bosom then than now ?

V.

THE PANTHEON.

This, too, is Upper-Room and festal hall
Where supper-table for the Christ is spread ;—
The pagan gods here own Him for their Head,—
They went before, obedient to His call,
Prepared the feast till the fit time should fall,
When " Master, all things ready now " they said ;—
He came, He poured the wine, He brake the bread,
He bless'd, and held communion with them all :
The lord of power, the queen of female grace
Are here, and he whose altar drips with blood,
The god of fluent speech and rapid pace,
The god of fire, and he who rules the flood,
She of the serpent-swathing helm and shield,
They of the peaceful hearth and fruitful field.

VI.

THE CARICATURE

(Of the Crucifixion sketched on the wall in slaves' apartments under Imperial Palace, Palatine Hill).

Whilst high o'erhead great Cæsar kept his feast,
 Here was no mirth for thee, thou honoured slave !
 Not thine who felt the wound, but his who gave ;
 And if long since both pain and spite have ceased,
 Here lie in graphic plaster unreleased
 The rude insulting lines of scribbling knave,
 Deriding thee, and Him who came to save,
 As tho' His Cross held mongrel man and beast ;—
 Alexamēnus ! thine was woe indeed,
 No silver-tongued reproach, nor silken shame ;—
 Poor slave, we pity thee, we praise thy creed,
 We laud the Christ, we laud His Cross with fame
 Loud as the world is wide,—yet still, alas !
 The Christian bearing *his* we deem—an ass !

VII.

THE CRUCIFIXION

(Of Guido Reni, in church of St. Lorenzo, Rome).

Sorrow and Peace meet here at Heaven's door
 In this pale Form suffused with silvery light ;
 I never knew a sadder, holier sight ;
 I never heard persuasive speech before
 Of Love's low whisperings—Go, and sin no more :

The bleeding Love that makes my crimson white,
From depths of woe and sweetness infinite,
As moonlit waves come moaning to the shore ;—
It draws me as a trembling captive near ;
It veils with beauty all I would not see ;
Subdues the horror, brings the better fear ;
And greets me with the new song yet to be
When self-effulgent shines His Cross of pain,
And all hearts hail the Lamb that once was slain.

VIII.

THE COMMUNION.

AT ST. PETER'S, ROME.

There was an angel in the old priest's face,
If angel bless'd might be with snow-white years,
And eyes all dewy-wet with unshed tears ;
He, only he, did consecrate the place
With breathing balm, and founts of heavenly grace ;
To look on him was death to low-bred fears,
And life to hopes laid out upon their biers :
His every feature bore in every trace
Melchisedec : his smile a sacrament,
The gorgeous edifice had been but poor
Awaiting it, and Art's great wealth ill-spent ;
Some old-time minister on Scottish moor
He might have been, when martyr blood was shed,
And 'neath the lapwing's cry the feast was spread !

IX.

THE PILGRIMS,

AT THE COMMUNION.

In crowds they came, and on their bended knees
Crept near, and nearer still, row after row,
Moving in solemn ranks, subdued and slow,—
Nor aught had they the carnal sense to please,
Mere dregs, and social “wines upon the lees”
 Not well-refined, but drugg’d with toil and woe;
Each one the Father bless’d, and did it so
As tho’ he felt ’twere done “to one of these”;—
Their plaintive song the meanwhile rose and fell,
Now fainting, now reviving, deep and shrill,
Such as the woman’s heart at Jacob’s Well
 Might yield, or the long wail from Calvary’s hill
Which through the ages never yet could cease
Its tuneful tears and pantings after peace!

X.

AT SHELLEY’S GRAVE,

IN THE ENGLISH CEMETERY, ROME.

The gentle stars on thee shake down their dews,
Pure and unfettered Soul of liquid song!
Less free than none thou minglest in the throng
Whom Light no eye e’er saw doth interfuse
And robe for evermore with rainbow hues;

It were to Immortality a wrong
To say *Here, There*, of thee, *How brief, How long* ;
Nor shall one thrill the less o'ertake thy Muse
Till lustre find a grave in Beauty's eye,
Till woman's bosom spurn her child's caress,
Till Thought forsake the dreaming wilderness,
And Life repine when the sweet Spring draws nigh ;
Till yon fair cloud forswear her shining dress,
And this bright lark his pathway to the sky !

XI.

AT KEATS'S GRAVE,

NOT FAR FROM SHELLEY'S.

Thy name is "writ in water"—writ in tears,
As that Name is to whom all creatures bow ;
In shades of Sorrow's temple dwellest thou
Where Fame no tablet to her children rears,
But there are choirs of the melodious years
To weep for aye, as they are weeping now,
For thee, and bear thy name upon their brow,
And waft thy music round and round the spheres ;—
Oh for a draught of that immortal wine
Which he, for thy sole self, filled to the brim,
Whose "heart of hearts," now laid not far from thine,
Once bled for thee, as thou had'st bled for him !
Oh choicest boon that friendliest Fate could bring—
To be as sweetly sung as thou thyself could'st sing !

PROVIDENCE.

An Incident of Earthquake in Italy.

High Carnival begins to cloy ;—
 With less of madness, more of joy,
 Behold! our bright-eyed peasant boy
 Within his own home lingers ;
 The crowd may vent their pious rage,—
 Far humbler things his soul engage—
 Lures his pet sparrow from the cage
 And feeds it on his fingers.

Beneath that fair Italian sky,
 While soft the evening shadows lie,
 How bright the little flutterer's eye,
 And how the throat is swelling
 To trill out thanks with all his might!
 Love never saw a prettier sight,—
 His ecstasy of warm delight
 Each to the other telling!

Thro' haze the morning sun arose,
 Thro' sultry air grown thick with woes,
 For in the earthquake's awful throes
 The Carnival has ended ;
 Ruin's black mantle covereth all,
 The lowly cot, the princely hall,
 The labouring brute-beasts in the stall,
 In one great horror blended !

Poor peasant boy ! he breathes his last,
A brother's arms around him cast ;—
Thus lovingly his life he passed,—
 Thus piously he perished ;
All hid beneath the ghastly mound,
Only his hand above the ground,
And there, as on a perch, is found
 The little bird he cherished !

The God of earthquakes, driving o'er
Bewildered sea and groaning shore,
Unlatched the little captive's door
 With just a touch so slender,—
The great, the good God over all,
Who guards the sparrow from its fall,
And when His ways do most appal—
 Most mercifully tender !

Thou tiny prophet from the tomb,—
Thou bud of an immortal bloom,—
Hope's flower, upon the bed of doom
 In deathless glory springing,—
Thee, little bird ! I carry hence,—
A sign,—a charm,—a Providence,—
A flood of heavenly affluence
 Upon my pathway flinging !

A MEMORABLE DAY.

*On Coaching Tour, G. & S.-W. R., Dalmellington
and New Galloway, May 27, 1896.*

To think of it is like a glorious dream ;
 Nature beguiled us with her ample best ;
 The White Thorn might have robed an angel's breast ;
 Grand organ-tones were in the tumbling stream ;
 In deep Ness Glen came down the glinting beam
 Like hope for some poor prisoner ; on crest
 Of the wild moor we might have been possess'd
 With wings, so brisk the buoyant air did seem ;—
 Cairnsmuir, The Kells, the quiet Lake of Doon,
 The jewell'd fields all glittering gold and white,
 The very graves, wherein alas ! too soon
 Lie all, were fraught with visions of delight ;—
 Serene, like us, the sun that day arose,—
 He sank, not more content than we, in calm repose.

THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS.

A ROADSIDE ROMANCE.

A floweret by the brookside grew,
 It was a dainty, blue-eyed thing ;
 (Alas ! the happy moments flew
 As swiftly as a bird on wing !)
 A sweet lass led me to the spot.
 I wished she would forget-me-not ;
 To speak I did not dare to do,
 My wish in secret harbouring.
 (And still the moments flew, they flew
 As swiftly as a bird on wing !)
 She stood, she turned her sharply round,
 She stooped, she touched the dewy ground ;
 I saw the deepening colour speak
 Faintly upon her nut-brown cheek ;
 She murmured, and the tune I knew
 Such as alone true love could sing.
 (Alas ! the happy moments flew
 As swiftly as a bird on wing !)
 We rested by the green hillside ;
 Fain both to show it and to hide,
 She held the floweret in her hand
 Silent, but I could understand
 She wished I would forget her not ;
 And ever will I love the spot
 Where by the brook the floweret grew—
 It was a dainty, blue-eyed thing.
 (Alas ! the moments flew, they flew
 As swiftly as a bird on wing !)

MY FRIEND. MY RESTING-PLACE.

I.

The heart of God lies near to me in thee,
 Dear Friend, my hope, more bright with fleeting years;
 Nor hath the love of mother ceased to be,
 Though she long since hath dwelt beyond the spheres;
 Her love still lives in thine, celestial, free,
 Full of unfathomed gladness and of tears ;
 Breathe thou but one kind word to greet my ears,
 It speaks of all the friends I ever knew—
 Thyself more rich to me than all the rest,
 More high than highest, better than the best ;—
 Bear thou me up, Kind Heart, and bear me through ;
 Thy loving deeds, though great, are all too few ;
 Were any flower of half thy charms possess'd,
 'Twere fit to grace—not mine—an angel's breast !

II.

Here, from the strain of toil too strong for me,
 Thankful, I turn aside to rest awhile ;—
 Within a space not large but well-embower'd
 With trees, and rich in fragrant flowers,
 My peaceful dwelling stands ;—it is a place
 To me all redolent of sweeter balm
 Than worship ever found in golden fanes ;—

This flower-bespangled sod my temple is,
Girt round by leafy walls of evergreen,
And arch'd by that blue Infinite above :
Great God, my God, permit my own poor praise
To mingle with the incense of the rose,
And worship of assiduous ants and bees,
For all my work is Thine, and Thine my rest.

AT WORDSWORTH'S GRAVE.

Of Immortality he sang, and here
Sleeps he right well amid immortal things ;
No fane is this that mortal hands can rear,
And crowd with monumental priests and kings ;—
Better that grassy mound than marble floor,
Those hills for walls, for roof that ample sky,
For song the singing birds, the thunder's roar,
Or the bright angel-brook that bubbles by ;—
With common folk he lies in common ground,
That was and is their common dwelling-place,
God's whisper in the forest trees around,
And on the lake His calm benignant face,—
Sweet fragrant House of God that poets know,
And thine, Immortal Bard, to make it so !

A BIRTHDAY IDYL.

CONCERNING MATRIMONY AND SHEARS.

Take these scissors, my poor gift,
 Use them well with hand of thrift ;
 When thy daily task is found,
 Shape it neatly, clip it round :
 From thy habits, day by day,
 Snip some naughty fringe away ;
 When thy thoughts on high would wing,
 Unclasp the cage, and cut the string :
 Words may wound like thorn in hedge,
 Deftly trim them round the edge ;
 Walkest thou where scandal rails ?
 Hold thy toes and prune thy nails :
 Wherever truth is said or sung,
 Prick thine ears and clip thy tongue ;
 Thy scissors can, with unshamed face,
 Fold meekly in this humble case,—
 A little oil, a gentle squeeze,
 And thou thyself might vie with these :
 Cast no reproaches, else beware,
 The point will turn, and will not spare ;
 Forgive me what my fancy draws,
 Scissors transformed to rasping saws ;
 My Muse, poor duck ! of sluggish wing,
 Can quack, but neither soar nor sing.

Long, long, by old Time's rusty knife,
Unsevered be thy thread of life !
We two, my darling, hold together
Like these two blades each to the other ;
Unlock them, each would useless be,
So were it, love, 'twixt thee and me ;
Each helping each, both serving both,
Discreetly thus we cut our cloth,
Till in Death's ocean drops the sun,
And Life's whole happy task is done.

A BIRTHDAY OFFERING.

If Love her best can yield when least is said,
And be her kindest when thought is still,
Earning her highest boon by mere sweet will,
And thrive on trust as on her daily bread,
Then would I, like a rose whose leaves are shed,
Some little space within the memory fill
With balm, which never cankering care would kill,
A fragrance when the flower is long since dead ;
For other gift from me, alas ! is none,—
With full heart only and with empty hands,
Walking between thee and the evening sun
Adown the misty way of Hope's waste lands,
I greet thee, dearest soul of all that live,
With Love's poor self when Love naught else can give !

TEMPUS FUGIT.

This young and happy year will soon grow old,
 And sadden as the hurrying days go by ;
 Angel of snowy breast and wing of gold,
 'Twill wither all too soon, and droop and die ;—
 We list to hear the message from the sky,
 When lo ! the story is already told,
 And on our lagging lips there rests a mournful spell,—
 We mean to welcome, and we say a long farewell !

God of my life ! not so, not so with me !
 I grow not old, but I grow young again ;
 My youth returns as I draw nearer Thee,
 Thrice-blesséd Hope of frail and guilty men !
 Old Time, my foe, I glide far past thy ken,
 And from thy wrinkled finger I am free ;
 Cloud not my heart's young dawn with thy bewildering
 fears,
 I walk unhurt the wilderness of wasting years !

Me, born of God, the lovely angels bring
 Back to the child's true Home of long ago ;
 Now elfin-joys peep forth from each plain thing,
 The daisy-chain delights that children know,
 When sunbeams dance and piping breezes blow !
 Mine are the snowy breast and golden wing,
 Not thine, to whom adieu ere yet thou hast been here,
 Thou brief sad angel of the new and waning year

A NEW-YEAR MEDITATION.

No stranger thou, whom God doth send
 In mercy to my open door,—
 New Year ! I hail thee as a friend
 Whom I have known and loved before.

The memory of bygone years
 Is Hope's best promise for to-day ;
 And while I mount to yonder spheres
 It seems an old familiar way.

A new path ; yet it must be old,—
 The same wherein I learnt to roam ;
 It leads the lost sheep to the fold,—
 The lost child backward to its home.

Hail to thee, gracious, glad New Year !
 The mask thou takest from my woe ;
 The rich ripe future bringest here
 With the lost friends of long ago.

Nay ; my lost self thou dost restore,
 And all the false grows real and true ;—
 My Friend, I love thee as of yore,
 For are we not both old—and new ?

New Year ! thou art a mystic thing ;—
 Like the brown leaves that make the mould,
 Then in the green and balmy Spring
 Come forth so young,—and yet so old !

AULD YEAR AND NEW.

Not altogether ill, nor good,
 The Auld Year helped us as he could ;
 What sins were done, and what withstood,
 We cannot tell,—
 He helped us to our daily food ;—
 So far, so well.

He shivered in the winter snows,
 Frost-bit his fingers and his toes,—
 And the cauld quivering drop had froze
 As hard as steel,
 At thin end of his hookit nose,—
 The puir auld chiel!

But buried prophets rise again ;—
 What shall the Auld Year tell us then ?
 God gave us talents five or ten,—
 What fools were we
 To squander in the idler's den
 Heaven's noble fee !—

Who cometh ? Mercy ! who is this
 With rosy face brimful of bliss,—
 Lips pleading for a sonsy kiss,—
 And laughing eyes ?
 Some cherub whom they needs must miss
 In Paradise !

Come hither, hail ! Hope's dainty flower !
Child-king, who rul'st the festive hour !
Child-god, girt with a giant's power
Of large increase !
Oh, to each cottage, kirk, and tower,
Send swift-wing'd Peace !

Old age with joyous youth renew ;
Restore false hearts, and keep them true ;
Where upas-tree of Error grew,
Cursing the plain,
Let Truth in fields of glistening dew
Rear golden grain !

Brief life is thine ; but ere it close,
Love reign where Strife's red ruin flows ;
Nor hard Toil, from defeated throes,
Lift hopeless cry ;
Reft be the earth of half her woes
Ere thou shalt die !

BEN HARDY'S BAIRN.

"A little child shall lead them."

In the deep shade of Silverwood
 A cottar's humble dwelling stood,
 And at the door one Summer's day
 A little child was seen to play ;
 And with a dark and roguish eye
 A pedlar-loon was passing by,
 And when he saw her sweet wee face
 Stood like a statue in his place ;
 Then quickly from his crookéd back
 Tumbled the treasures from his pack,
 And held them to her kindling eyes—
 Trinkets of many shapes and dyes.

And thus he played his cunning part :
 "What would you have, my little heart?"
 She clapp'd her hands, "Gi'e little Nannie
 That bonnie braw wee sodger mannie."
 "Sweet little Nan, a gift so small
 No better is than none at all,—
 But this hot sun is killing me,
 Come to the shade of yonder tree,
 I'll give you there, my pretty pet,
 A present that a queen might get."

So under the greenwood tree they sat,
But none ere saw them after that.
Oh ! dark deed for so bright a day !
He stole the forest-flower away ;—
No, peeping thro' life's morning hour
She had not grown to be a flower,
But just a bud and nothing more,
That promised at her father's door
With dewy lips and laughing eye
To be a sweet rose by-and-by.

Now homeward hied with heavy tread,
With sweaty brow and aching head,
Ben Hardy from his toil severe,
And home, sweet home, at length is near.
Tho' sorely rack'd in limbs without
Ben had a heart both brave and stout,
Unheld by weariness or care,
I trow there was no aching there ;
For deep in his broad manly breast
A little bird had built her nest,
And there she sang the live-long day
The tune of " Drive dull care away ;
Cheer up, cheer up, good honest Ben,
Here's home, and wife, and wean again."

So at a certain heap of stones
Ben used to leave his weary bones,
For there his sweet child every day
Met him and kissed him on the way ;

And in his brawny arms he caught her
And home triumphantly he brought her ;
And strange, as little Nan grew older,
She seemed no heavier on his shoulder.
Oh, such a ride ! more joy it brings
Than splendid carriages of kings,
With panoply of wealth and power,
And clapping crowds to gape and glower ;
Give me for all these vulgar charms
The carriage of Ben Hardy's arms !

Well, honest Ben came to the spot,
But there, alas ! he found her not ;
And tears rose in his anxious eyes,
And thus he cried with sad surprise ;
“ What ails thee,—why not at the cairn,
Sweet little Nan, my bonnie bairn ? ”

Oh, heavy was the woodman's tread,
And heavy hung his aching head ;
A heavy weight his bosom bare
Because he had no burden there ;
And when he neared his door at last
Maggie, his wife, came running fast,
And cried, “ Oh, Ben ! why, tell me, pray,
Where have you left wee Nan to-day ? ”
’Twas plain that some mischance had come,
And to her loud cries Ben was dumb.

Then each read in the other's face
The horrors of some dreadful case ;

And then they hurried to and fro
Wherever Nan was used to go,—
In flowery nook and velvet green,
But not a footprint could be seen.

The startled hare leaps from the brake,
And sleepy songsters half-awake,
Aroused by Maggie's loud lament,
Chirp timidly their discontent ;
And when she asks for "Nannie dear !"
Deceitful echoes answer "Here."
And Ben thus tries to check her moan
Though he could scarce hold in his own,—
"Be quiet, Mag,—what's this ado ?
In some sweet nook not far from view
The child's asleep, you may be sure,
As cosy as it is secure ;—
But hark ! No, Mag, she's not asleep,
I thought I heard her cry 'Bo-peep !'"
"Ah, Ben," quoth she, "'tis hard to tell,
She sleeps at bottom of the well."
Then straightway Ben he bolted in
Until the water touched his chin ;
But out he came all dripping wet,
And poor wee Nan was yet to get.

So through the wood and through the glade
Their frantic search was vainly made ;
By many a bank and downy dell
Dear to the daisy and blue-bell ;

And many a crag's outreaching crest
Where Nan's wee foot could not have press'd ;
And deep down in the loch below
They grappled wildly to and fro ;
And when the dark night drew her pall
Over the earth, wee Nan, and all,
Unwillingly they ceased to roam,
And in deep silence wandered home.

Alas ! it was their home no more,
And scarcely had they crossed the floor
When up they rose, both Mag and Ben,
And forth they went and searched again—
And so they searched, and so they came,
And so they went and searched the same,
Hour after hour, and day by day,
Till many weeks had passed away ;
But all in vain the search went on,
The rose-bud it was plucked and gone,
And all the greenwoods, blythe and fair,
Seemed joyless, desolate, and bare.

The warblers in the woods are dumb,
Chill Winter like a scourge has come,
And shorn with tempests keen and rude
The shaggy locks of Silverwood ;
And everything on earth below
Is sanctified with saintly snow ;
And giant oaks in ghostly charms
Lift up their white and naked arms ;
And snow-flakes fall and gently rest,
Cold blessings, on the robin's crest.

Ben Hardy's cottage-walls and roof
Against the storm stood sturdy proof ;
The fierce blast howled about the door,
But never dared to venture more ;
And though a flake might chance to fall
Upon the hearthstone,—that was all ;
'Twas tight and warm in every part
Like honest Ben's own trusty heart ;
As quiet, cosy, neat, and clean
As Mag herself was always seen.
The languid Sun has ta'en his leave,
And all in white comes Christmas Eve ;
In silence at the hearth they sat—
Maggie on this side, Ben on that ;
The merry flame in mantling fog
Leaps up fantastic from the log,
And mimicking his rise and fall
Queer shadows dance upon the wall.

“ Oh, Mag, how vacantly you stare,
Upon the fire-logs burning there !
Aye absent, absent, seeking still
The sweet wee flower that used to fill
That bosom half a year ago
With fragrance of a Heaven below !
Ay, ay, it is not hard to seek
The pale rose on your hollow cheek ! ”

Such thoughts as these ran through his head
Though not a word Ben Hardy said ;

Nor did he stir from out his place,
But gazed in Maggie's absent face.
At last the crackling from the hearth
Recalled her from the sky to earth ;
For when her bairn is found nowhere,
What mother would not seek it there ?

Then when he saw her dream had passed
Good honest Ben outspoke at last :
" Now, tell me, Mag, where have you been ? "
Quoth she, " I had a dream yestreen,
And fondly every hour since then
I've dreamt it o'er and o'er again.
Oh, Ben, I thought the angels came
And reft wee Nannie frae her hame,
And upward as they swiftly hied,
' Oh, mercy ! leave me not ! ' I cried ;
But a dark spirit drew a screen
Of terror and of wrath between ;
The while my arms I madly toss'd,
With little Nannie all was lost.
But, lo ! when I was nearly spent
The cloudy veil was quickly rent,
And there was Nan in royal state
Just entering the golden gate ;
But when they looked and saw my woe
The angels seemed to let her go,
And down she came, the dear wee thing !
With ruby face and silver wing.
Oh, what a rapture ! Oh, how brief !—
Oh, mockery of a mother's grief ! "

With sore-bewildering hopes and fears
Maggie's voice melted into tears,
And like a thunder-shower they drap,
Alas ! into her empty lap.
Ben's too, belike, in woeful race
Ran down his weather-waukit face ;
In vain he offered to withstand,
Or hide it with his horny hand.

Now, Maggie had a secret spot,
Ben might suspect but knew it not,
More precious than the mint of kings,
Her treasury of sacred things ;
And it was always there in chief
Her hungry sorrow sought relief.
She rose to bring them from their place
With sorrow smiling in her face.
" With tears," quoth she to honest Ben,—
" They need to be refreshed again."

And on the table ranged anew
They stood all wet in long review.
There was a pair of worn-out shoes
None but a little child could use ;
A pinafore all stained and torn
Some little innocent had worn ;
And dolls in trim from top to toe,
Or full-dress as the fashions go ;
With many other trifles more,—
And Maggie kissed them o'er and o'er.

But all this while she little knew
That two dark eyes were peering through
The window, for she had forgot
Whether it had a blind or not.
In spite of cold and wind and showers
Those two dark eyes had watched for hours,
And not a shadow rose or fell
But they had seen and marked it well.

But hearken ! for the eyes have fled,—
A rapping at the door instead :
Ben opened, and a man came in—
Dark image of incarnate sin,
Whose tell-tale features, bold and bad,
Held all the honesty he had ;
His black hair hung in matted chains
Over a narrow brow like Cain's ;
His eye-glance, pitiless and fell
As any firebrand lit in Hell,
Gleamed in an instant every way,
Like wild beast roaming for its prey ;
His lips, it seemed he'd bit them small
Until he scarce had lips at all ;
And wrinkles criminal and base
Wriggled like serpents o'er his face ;
His dress, for fashion's sake, almost
Might have been worn in Pharoah's host,
And since 'twas rather worse for wear,
Perchance it did first flourish there ;
His mantle from the snowy wreath
Sheltered his tunic underneath ;

But hat and shoes, as one might know,
Were over head and heels in snow ;—
He was a man far past his prime,
But had been sturdy in his time.

What did he want ? No good, no doubt ;
And Ben he would have thrust him out,
But Maggie held him by the sleeve :
“ Be cautious, Ben, ’tis Christmas Eve,
And some, touch’d by the needy’s prayers,
Have welcomed angels unawares.”
“ Angels,” quoth Ben, “ must want for bliss
Who come to us in shape like this.”
“ Pity,”—the stranger’s words were these—
“ My frozen blood and feeble knees.”

And soon as Maggie knew his case
Her woman’s heart leapt to her face ;
She hearkened to his mild desire,
She stirr’d for him the smouldering fire,
She set him in the coziest seat,
She stoop’d and wiped his frozen feet,
Hot-steaming from the chimney-nook
Her Ben’s own supper forth she took,
And brought her uncut Christmas cake,—
All for the shivering stranger’s sake.

And he did eat in sullen gloom
Like one next hour to meet his doom ;
Then on the table cast his eye
Where Nannie’s rags and playthings lie,

And in a strange hoarse whisper, said,
"Has little birdie gone to bed?"
The mother's breast began to swell;
She told him how it all befell,
As to an angel's listening ear,
With many a mingled sob and tear.

Oh, what a groan the stranger gave,
As if some sword his bosom rave!
All ghastly pale his visage grew,
He gnashed his lips of livid hue;
He had some woe he could not smother,
His knees they smote upon each other;
Dog-like he sprang to reach the door,—
He stayed and staggered on the floor;
And when he gaped as if to speak
His dry tongue clattered in his cheek;
Once, twice, and yet again he tried
Till thus in fearful tones he cried:
"God! it is dreadful here to sit,
It burns me like the brimstone pit;
Your words, your tears, your hearth, your bread,
Heap coals of fire upon my head!
Oh, woman! rise and strike and slay
The wretch who stole your child away;
Beside our tents on Silverhill
The prayer you taught her rises still,—
No curse of mine could quench her cry;
Go, bring her home, and let me die!"
He ceased, he reel'd, ere one could tell
Prone with a mighty thud he fell;—

Mag held her breath, looked helpless on,—
And cried to Ben,—but Ben was gone ;
Fast thro' the tangled wood he flew,
And dashed among the gipsy crew
Where, heedless of the snow and mire,
They crouched in revels round the fire ;
Sped on, till midway through the camp,
In shelter from the cold and damp,
He saw a little bundle lie,
And stooping down, he knew not why,
Beneath the broad-wheeled caravan,
He took it up, and—there was Nan !
Oh, what a rapture filled his breast
As the wee birdie there he press'd ;
And scarcely had he turned his face,
When lo ! all breathless with the race,
His own dear Mag was close to view
And folded in his bosom too.

Now home at length, wee Nan, amazed,
Her sleepy eyelids slowly raised,
And cried, “ My dad ! my mammy dear !
Oh joy, joy, joy, to meet you here ! ”
Poor thing ! she thought life's journey pass'd,
And all had met in Heaven at last.

The gipsy men, some three or four,
Had traced Ben's footprints to his door,—
They saw their mate, nor grieved were they,
Where on the ground stone-dead he lay ;

They bore him to the self-same tree
Where first forgathered Nan and he ;
They laid no wreaths upon his bier ;
They buried him without a tear ;
But many a time upon the spot
Small fingers laid "forget-me-not."

Far thro' that holy Christmas night
Ben Hardy's window flashed with light ;
And the unwhispering trees around
Heard swellings of a joyful sound.
The silent angels, too, on high
Were listening to an infant's cry ;
And joyfully recording there
A Father's penitential prayer.

For by his own babe's lisping tongue
Ben's heart with agony was wrung,—
Long had he ceased to pray himself ;
So, raxing to a dusty shelf,
And from a dark sequester'd nook,
He brought his father's pride—The Book ;
And ever after made to rise
Morning and evening sacrifice.

LITTLE NELLY NOBODY.

Little Nelly Nobody (she was six years old or so),
 In the lonely street, with naked feet, was wading
 through the snow ;
 She was not going home that night, for home she
 never knew ;
 And if she had not many friends, her foes were also
 few.
 While many a child crept cosily on many a velvet floor,
 This ragged wean, this beggar bairn, did crawl from
 door to door ;
 And as they gave an orange here, and there a slice of
 cake,
 Until, her little apron full, the string was like to break,
 She wonder'd why they were this night so ready to re-
 lieve—
 Poor silly thing ! she did not know that it was Christ-
 mas eve.

At length upon a frozen step, with scarce a rag to hap,
 She sat her down, and tried to count the bounties in
 her lap ;
 She had not been to school, you know, and so could
 scarcely say—
 But three, or ten, or thereabout she thought the num-
 ber lay ;

Yet still how many oranges and crumbs of cake were
there,
She did not want so much to find, as somebody to
share ;
The redbreast was asleep, no dog, nor sparrow could
be seen,
No hungry creature came, or else how happy had she
been !
Good Christian child ! her little store was empty every
day,
For when herself had just enough, she gave the rest
away.

But soon by chance she lifted up her liquid languid
eyes
And lo ! a creature sure enough was there, of wondrous
size ;
By the street lamp's fitful glare she saw the features of
a man,
And down his breast a hoary beard like silver stream-
lets ran ;
His white locks leaped around his brow like wreaths
of drifting snow,
And his mantle it was hemmed with stars in many a
sparkling row.

And such a sight, so great a fright made Nelly quake
and cry,
But there was laughter on his lip, and kindness in his
eye ;

And when she saw his face, and heard how tenderly
he spoke,
She thought an angel was behind, and meant it for a
joke.

"Weep not, my little lamb!" he cried, "and cast away
your fear,

I'm come to take you home, my child, and give you
better cheer;

On a bare stone, and all alone, so shelterless and bare,
'Twill never do for such as you to take your supper
there.

Get up, my little dear, and haste, for if you only knew
What things are spread, how anxiously they wait at
home for you."

"At home, Sir! why that is not me—they've told a
wicked tale,

Unless you mean the workhouse home, or put me into
jail;

I have not done no wrong, good Sir, pray let me from
your door,

Forgive this once, and on the step I'll never sit no
more."

"Oh, fie, my pet! you don't forget—don't you remem-
ber me?

Whom all good children ne'er forget, and like so much
to see—

Old Father Christmas, don't you know, come back to
town again,

To make them think of Christ, who died to save the
sons of men?"

“ Good Sir, I ne’er saw you before, and this I only know :
I begs for bread, and father’s dead, and left me long ago.”

“ My heart ! Oh no, it is not so, He lives not far away,
And now He sends for all His friends to sup with Him
to-day ;

Saying to all in His banquet-hall, and joyful was the
sound,—

‘ Nelly was dead, and is alive—was lost, and now is
found ;

Go, Father Christmas, where she sits, outcast in
rags and sin,

And bring her home, for till you come our feast shall
not begin.’ ”

Then did Saint Christmas fold her up, poor lambie,
in his breast,

No mother could more sweetly soothe her baby into
rest ;

And tho’ his breast, by the frosty beard that from his
chin did fall,

Seemed cold and bare, once you were there it was not
cold at all.

I do not know the road he took, but Nelly scarce
had laid

Her weary head upon the bed his snow-white bosom
made,

When the dark night burst into light, breaking the
gloomy bars,

As if it had been crowned with suns instead of twink-
ling stars ;

And oh ! what raptures rush'd at once on Nelly's
ravish'd view,
For all old things had passed away, and everything
was new.
No streets were there, nor palaces, nor such-like earth-
ly things,
The crowds on living verdure walked, or flew on angel's
wings ;
And lifting her eyes (what a sweet surprise !) to her
guardian old and grey,
Behold ! his iciness, and oldness too, had melted quite
away ;
No seraphim could equal him, he seemed so young
and fair ;
Smooth was the skin of his dimpled chin, and locks of
golden hair
Flow'd down his face, and took the place of those that
time had stain'd,
But the loving-kindness of his eye, and that alone re-
mained.

And thro' the sky these two did fly to where the feast
was spread,
With guests all met, the table set, her Father at its
head.
It was a place well furnished all with everything to
please ;
The roof was heaven, the walls were thighs and arms
of noble trees.
First rose a hum, "Nelly is come !" and then the
joyful sound

Of a thousand lyres from seraph choirs that floated all
around ;

And the glad Father rose in haste and left His lofty
place,

And came and took her up, and gazed, and gazed into
her face.

And Nelly knew His look at once, but how she could
not tell ;

She ne'er had seen her Father's face, and yet she knew
Him well,—

The face of mother, sister, brother, long since dead
and gone,

Lost not a trace upon the face that now she gazed upon.
There into one were blended all those old familiar faces,
For it was charmed with every charm, and graced with
all the graces.

And the glad Father took her first with His own tender
hands,

And robed her clean, till like a queen she shone a-
mong the bands ;

And then He pressed each happy guest, and joyful was
the sound,—

“Nelly was dead, and is alive—was lost, and now is
found.”

Now morning breaks on the snow-flakes that lie around
the door

Where old Saint Christmas gathered up poor Nell
the night before,

And the children all burst from the hall for snowballs
on the stair.

One cries with a leap, "What a famous heap is in the corner there !

Ho, Dick ! come quick, and let us roll this ball along the street."

They tried as much, but to their touch came two small frozen feet !—

O horror ! what a fright it was ! they stood and scarce could breathe,—

All stiff and cold, some six years old, a corpse lay underneath.

With what a noise the startled boys rushed back into the hall !

And all the rest cried, "What a pest these boys are to us all !"

But soon they came, and saw, and sighed, and then they did begin

To say, "Alas ! what a pity 'twas we did not take her in."

It was not Nelly though, but just her broken cage of clay—

The bird had flown,—there on the stone the useless prison lay.

But the children cried, and nought they tried their tide of tears could stem ;

How vain was this ; but for her bliss, Nelly had wept for them !

The sexton dug a pauper's grave, and came to fetch the clay ;

The robins they were there before, but them he chased away ;

For in that lap and lifeless hand, that oft gave them
their fill,
The oranges and little crumbs of cake were lying still.
And nobody laid the head in the grave, and nobody
wept or prayed,
And nobody asks the sexton where that broken cage
is laid ;
For would you know who lies below, he says with a
growl and a stare,
“Oh, nobody ;—no matter who, 'tis neither here nor
there.”

TODDLIN' TAMMIE.

"Like as a father pitieth his children."

Twa-year-auld wee toddlin' Tammie,
 Fu' o' daffin, fu' o' din ;
 Winsomer wee sonsie lambie,
 Brawer bairn to his ain mammie
 Never throve in halesome skin.

Dainty chiel ! thy faither's crony !
 Pure thy breast, and sorrow-free ;
 His, alas ! grown hard and stony !
 Scant o' sense (if he has ony),
 Aye a sprinklin' o't in thee.

Angels in the Blue up yonder
 Nursed thee in their starry sheen ;
 Fond were they, but we, still fonder,
 See it there the mair we ponder,—
 See it in thy bonnie e'en.

Many a blast o' windy blether
 Arts and Sciences can blaw ;—
 Thine to haud wi' mystic tether
 In thy heart, like straps o' leather,
 Secrets darker than them a'.

Ugh ! be hanged, ye splutt'rin' monkey !
A' my ink clean whummelt ower !
Black my scrip as Satan's bunkie,—
Laugh ! ye idiotic spunkie !
Syne, I'll mak' ye gape an' glower !

Weel, weel ; dinna ye be cryin'—
After a', ye're but a wean ;
Nae doubt, ye were only tryin'
To bring oot some thocht deep lyin' .
In your bannock o' a brain.

Wee bit sturdy, stacherin' chappie,
Gleg wee man as e'er was seen,
Ken ye why the big saut drappie,
No ill spent, nor yet unhappy,
Fa's doun frae your faither's e'en ?

Thy wee roun' cheek, saft and callow
Thy wee pow o' sunny hair ;—
His is gettin' grey, puir fallow !
An' his face grows thin and sallow
Wi' the bitter clytes o' care.

Shall he ever live to see thee
Hale and strong on life's brae-tap,
Glad in a' the world can gie thee,—
Or in wae misfortune dree thee
To the grave, thy mither's lap ?

Speak nae mair the word o' sorrow !
Bring nae mair the feckless tear !
Foolish wark it is to borrow
Frae the toom pouch o' to-morrow—
God is guid—to-day is here !

My wee Tam, should ill befa' thee,
Thole it weel till a' be dune ;
Slander's tongue may oft misca' thee ;
Pleasure's gilded toys withdraw thee
Into slimy paths o' sin ;—

But the Shepherd, kind and tender,
Ance a wee bit lamb like thee,
Kens fu' weel what help to render—
A' the frail folks' ain Defender,
Never Frien' sae staunch as He.

Soon shall cease thy childish prattle ;
Soon to sterner things give place
Spinning-top, and trump, and rattle,—
Gang thy gate, and fight thy battle,
Gird thee weel, and win the race !

Here not long we bide thegither,
But we a' shall gather there,
Unco blythe wi' ane anither—
Wee bairns wi' their faither, mither—
In the lang, lang evermair.

GAVIN'S BIRTHDAY.

Little Gavin's first birthday—
 Not his last we hope and pray.
 Little roguish fairy bands
 Rub their eyes and clap their hands,
 And they say they hear him sigh :
 "Oh, how quick my days do fly !
 Life worth living? Nay, not so ;
 Born but one brief hour ago,
 Wearily its length has run,
 Empty, and already done ;
 Oh, how quick my days do fly !"

Little fairy rogues, you lie !
 Never happier elf than he ;
 Sunbeam could not brighter be !
 Hence, ye fools ! ye silly things !
 Tripping toes and sooty wings—
 Would you, dare you, if you can,
 Pessimise my little man ?
 Hence, I charge you ! come not near ;
 Nevermore shall bless your ear
 Doggie's bark and bairnie's coo,
 Bow, wow, wow, and moo, moo, moo !

Sudden gust and merry peal
 Thrilling me from head to heel,
 What can this confusion be ?

“Ha, ha, ha ! and he, he, he !”
Laughter from the fairy bands,
Rubbing eyes and clapping hands :
“Fickle, frolicsome are we,
Little kettles filled with glee,
On the hot fire boiling o’er,
Up the chimney, on the floor ;
Fickle, and of frolic full—
Sit you down, sir ; with a pull
From below we snatch your chair,
Head on ground and heels in air !
Down with awful flop you go—
How you sprawl, and puff, and blow !
Ha, ha, ha ! and he, he, he !
Of a crooked kind are we ;
Take our supper, night and noon,
With the wrong end of the spoon ;
Drink the goblet upside down ;
Bless you with a wicked frown ;
Pinch you with a sunny smile,
Mock your pain, and dance the while ;
Crowd the hearth, and range the wood,
Doing aught but what we should ;
Singing when we should be sad ;
Melancholic most when glad ;
Good-folks in our naughty ways,
Full of mischief, fond of praise ;
Good nor bad as you might deem,
Naughtier, kinder than we seem.
Never more the harsh word say—
No ; nor bid us hence away.

Merriest of romping elves,
Gavin, saucier than ourselves ;
Gavin, bless his little pate !
Chosen for our own playmate.
Gifts we bring from far and near,
Beads of dewdrop, bright and clear ;
Daisy-buds with silver frills,
Wholesome breezes from the hills ;
Breath of roses, fresh and sweet,
Lady-slippers for his feet ;
Elfin balls the fairies throw,
Frozen air and molten snow ;
Jewels from the tropic seas,
Yellow gold from orange trees ;
Fairy food brought from the moon,
Fairy saucer, cup and spoon ;
Honey joys in crystal jars
From beyond the winking stars ! ”

Oh, but ye are brave, said I.
Would that ye could backward fly !
Idle rogues ; run back and bring
Feather-dust from Gabriel's wing
On the flowers of Eden fell ;
Bring a drop from Jacob's well ;
Jacob's ladder, David's lyre,
Children's clothes that braved the fire ;
Bring the horn from Shiloh's tent,
Where the High Priest, old and bent,
Poured the blessing undefiled,
Holy oil on Hannah's child ;

Or beneath that later star,
Where a Babe lay, worthier far,
Angel-hosts mellifluent sang,
And the cold clear welkin rang.
Oh that ye, fond fays ! might bring
Seraph song and cherub wing
Round my year-old baby's head,
With the Saviour's unction shed
On the happy lambs who played,
Under vine and olive shade,
On the slopes of Zion hill !
And the rogues replied—" *We will !*"

INNOCENCE.

Sweetly the summer morn may shine,
 But sweeter, brighter far to me
 The love o' that wee lass o' mine,
 The blinkin' o' my bairnie's e'e ;
 Let me but pree her dainty mou',
 Let me but press her sonsy cheek,
 Fresh roses drench'd wi' honey-dew
 I winna hae, I carena seek !

Lang syne a fragrant lily sprang
 In frailty at the Saviour's feet ;
 He saw it as He stept along,
 And with a smile divinely sweet,
 "Wee flower," quoth He, " I bid thee cheer—
 Tho' in the dust thy bed is laid,
 King Solomon wi' a' his gear
 Was no' sae handsomely arrayed ' "

Kind Saviour ! ne'er be far awa'
 Amid the stour o' earthly ways,
 To keep my bairnie clean and braw
 In handsomest o' saintly claes ;
 That men in this wee flower may find,
 When love is low and troubles rife,
 The beauty of a heavenly mind,
 The incense of eternal life !

A GOOD FIGHTER.

A special favourite of mine
 Is that sharp-witted boy of nine,
 Who in his crib in sickness lay,
 And many a wicked prank would play.
 The Doctor when he came to heal,
 In megrim pain or sullen mood,
 Was cured himself by laughter-peal,
 Much more than his own physic would ;
 And oft he swallowed 'gainst his will
 The tonic jest and frolic pill.

One morn the little chap was found
 In winding-sheet all smoothly wound ;
 More stiff, more spik-and-span than he
 No decent corpse could wish to be ;
 And on a paper at his head
 In pencil roundly writ they read
 How John had died on such a date ;
 How sadly mourned his cruel fate ;
 The place where first he saw the light,
 The time, and then from mortal sight
 Had passed away, in nine short years,
 'Mid groans and moans and floods of tears ;
 And at the close in compact phrase,
 None could be brighter,
 Accorded the due meed of praise
 To—"A Good Fighter!"

A MAN OF WEIGHT.

Upon the pedestal I stood
One day to make my true weight good :
Throw in my perfect stock of health,
My purse with all its weight of wealth,
My chimney towering black aloft,
My understandings limp and soft,
The burden of my cares and pains,
The bad blood coursing in my veins ;
Sermons in rude unshapen blocks
(Some more and some less orthodox),
The wine that made me somewhat heady,
My faithful crook to keep me steady,
My brain, my thick impervious hide,
And all my vanity and pride,
A heart too hard for axe of miner,
Sins that might sink a steam-ship liner ;—
Take them, and throw them one and all
Upon that groaning pedestal,
You'll not believe me tho' I swear it,
The iron ribs could hardly bear it !
Alas ! old Pharoah's lanky kine,
My whole gross weight was nine stone nine !

MOTHERHOOD.

Ah ! my blue-eyed baby-boy !
 Tiny fount of tears and joy,
 Whither art thou tending ?
 Whither go thy dainty feet ?
 Here thy heart began to beat—
 Where will it be ending ?

Oft my foolish heart will quake
 Lest the world should thee forsake,
 Or forget to love thee ;—
 Peace, O peace ! for this I know,
 Still hast thou, where'er thou go,
 God and Heaven above thee

Come, my ruby cup of wine !
 Put thy pretty lips to mine,
 Feast me with thy kisses !
 Ne'er were they so sweet before :
 Now I know, yes, know far more
 What an angel's bliss is !

Sheltered from a thousand harms,
 In the silk of thy soft arms
 Sweetly, safely folden,—
 Better shielded then am I
 Though ten legions from the sky
 Round me were beholden !

Merry stars are in thine eyes ;
Music in thy sorrow's cries,
 Piercing me like lances,
Agony all full of joy !
O my brightest baby-boy,
 Kill me with thy glances !

Happy, happy little thing !
All a cherub save the wing,
 What hast thou with sorrow ?
Trusting God will ever be
Kind each day to thee and me,
 Kinder each to-morrow !

BE STILL.

Poor child ! so hard, so hard bestead
 Ere yet tired Life took up her flickering lamp
 And fled !

Now, now, rest, rest thy head
 On this the sweetest pillow ever laid, tho' damp
 With many a drop from founts of bitter tears !
 Is not life lived by feeling more than years ?
 Poor child ! we measure not thy struggle by its length,
 Greater it had not been with all a giant's strength.

So still ! so still !

It is the Father's will
 For mighty nations, for the vex'd earth itself,
 For the bright hosts night-marshal'd in the sky,
 They have their life to live, their death to die,—
 All have their agony, sooner or later past,
 Then there is peace at last !
 Poor babe, thou had'st thy cares
 Not less divine than theirs !

Now, now,
 On that once ruffled brow,
 And in the eyes that sleep
 Within those two pale curtains half revealed,
 And on those tiny lips the God of Peace hath sealed,
 There is a new-made throne,
 Another new^{er} vast empire added to thy realm,
 Sweet Silence, lovely, sad, and lone,
 Thou saddest, holiest Empress ever known,
 Daughter of God, and Heir of all God's own !

Oh ! come,
 And teach us to be dumb !

VICTORY.

She is not here, and yet I dare not say
That she has passed away ;
Her presence like an angel in the gloom
Haunts me from room to room.

Her very absence brings her doubly near
Tho' mourned with many a tear ;
And now I know, while she was heard and seen
How distant we had been.

Distant ! I grieve to call it distance, when
We lived so closely then ;
But that was like a dream to this,—now, she
Is more like God to me.

From these complaining eyes she went apart,
And crept into my heart ;
The poor lost lamb that I can see nowhere
Is seven times folded there.

To meet her was a daybreak of delight
At morning, noon, or night ;
I never meet her now,—no space can screen us,—
No partings now between us !

There is a change in those old lonely hours,—
They are not mine, but ours ;
In sun or shade, in calm or stormy weather,
We two are still together.

Earth has a lovely face, and at the core
Kindness unknown before ;
All things are good and pure—my child, so be it !
Thou hast the eye to see it.

Mine ears are not my own, with her clean eyes
I scan both earth and skies ;—
God sings in every warbler of the bowers,—
God's face is in the flowers.

O Death ! how good it is, how blest a thing
To nestle 'neath thy wing !
Thy sunny face 'tis Heaven to behold,—
Thy touch turns all to gold.

Had she been harsh and fretful in her ways,
That now had been her praise ;
Her very faults had been more dear than graces
Worn in high Heavenly places.

But she was meek and patient as the dove,—
Her only fault was love ;—
I thought I knew,—yet first I found it so
Deep in the vale of woe.

When earth is rack'd with storms that still increase,
We know thee, gentle Peace !
Sweet Death ! I thank thee for the parting groan,—
My child is now mine own !

A REVERIE OF THE BEREAVED.

It was soon told, the child's own simple story—
 Twas hardly yet begun till it was ended
 And from this gloomy vale to heights of glory
 The softly-falling footsteps had ascended ;
 What wondrous power with weakness here was
 blended !

No sainted prophet, Heaven-inspired and hoary,
 Laden with some deep secret from the Lord to tell,
 E'er had so much to say, or said it half so well !

Panting, we press the little feet before us,
 Led by a way we never should have taken—
 Light from the better country breaking o'er us,
 And the old world we seem to have forsaken ;
 The meanwhile in our weary hearts awaken
 Strange echoes of the old angelic chorus,
 When from the Father came a Child of peace to men,
 As if it had revived when one returned again.

Yet for our child how can we cease repining ?
 More than he brought he took when he was
 dying—
 From the bright sun he took the golden shining,
 And beauty from the green earth underlying,
 And freshness where the open breeze was flying ;
 Wherever light and love were intertwining
 They sank, as daylight-sheen in Arctic ocean dips,
 When the soul passed the stainless marble of his lips.

We could believe, in one so frail and tender
A true Omnipotence was calmly sleeping,
The universal Maker and Defender
Who holds all creatures in His all-wise keeping ;
He dwelt in one scarce old enough for weeping,
And when we tried our poor vain help to render,
The child-eye glowed with utterance : it seemed to be—
Ye do it unto “ one of these,” and unto Me !

Oft of the future we were fondly dreaming,—
All trials—we, for his dear sake, could bear them ;
And when he rose where Fame’s high goal is gleaming,
His honours too—we humbly hoped to share
them ;—
The dreams are past and gone, and we can spare
them ;
There is a land where life needs no redeeming
From errors of the child, and from the parents’ pain,
And where the hope of loving hearts doth never wane.

But oh ! we could have kept him still beside us,
A beam of love before our faces playing ;
We recked not what the future might betide us
While he his soft cheek close to ours was laying,
With babbling lip some kindly thing was saying,
Or stretched his hand to fondle or to guide us !
O God ! he made us know how loving Thou must be,
And now we find and follow him in seeking Thee !

HOME-GOING.

Our little one, our hope and care,
 The angels took away,—
 The little spirit could not bear
 The burden of the clay.

We said, "Sweet one, O leave us not!"
 And angels answer'd thus :
 "Earth is a cold and dreary spot,—
 Nay, sweet one, come with us ;

"For earth, perchance, would cast away,—
 Thy friends may be unwise,
 And we can better keep than they,
 Their treasure in the skies.

"Thou art, sweet one, like Mary's Son,
 Who says, 'Come unto Me :'
 And parents dear shall come up here
 When they are like to thee."

And so amid our sobs and tears
 They took our babe away ;
 And looking thro' the lapse of years
 How could we answer nay ?

Dear babe ! in better hands than ours,
We know thou'rt happy there ;
Yet bitter tears we shed in showers,
And how can we forbear ?

We can forbear, by Jesus' grace ;
Now drawn by holier charms,
Sweet lamb ! we seek thy hiding-place
In the Redeemer's arms.

THE GRACES.

A Queen stands at her palace gates,
Radiant and kind,
And many a poor one on her bounty waits—
The maimed, the halt, the blind.

A blind old man and maiden fair,
Faintly and slow,
Come crouching to her feet, and murmur there
Their unpretending woe.

The Queen looks on with moistened eyes,
A little while ;
Then takes them by the hand, and bids them rise,
With a most welcome smile.

Her sweet mouth speaks to them of rest,
And daily food ;
She takes them in, she clasps them to her breast ;
She is Divinely good !

She claims them as of kindred race,
Calls them her own ;
They find her palace an enchanted place,
With an enchanted throne ;

She robes the maiden all in white,
 Sparkling with gold ;
She gives the blind such visions of delight
 As never yet were told.

And oh ! how these two poor ones praise
 Their queenly Giver !
He growing lustier with his length of days,—
 She fair and young for ever.

O Faith ! O fair young Hope ! his child
 Born from above !
Ye had been dead long since had she not smiled
 Whose sovereign name is Love !

A CHILD'S PRAYER.

The little star by night,
Shining in heaven,
Always doth shed the light
Jesus hath given.

Father, I pray
That it may be
Even so with me
From day to day !

The little drop of dew,
In lonely place,
Worketh for Jesus too,
By Jesus' grace.

Father, I pray
That it may be
Even so with me
From day to day !

The lily, fair and bright,
Grows by the flood,
Like saints, washed clean and white
In Jesus' blood.

Father, I pray
That it may be
Even so with me
From day to day !

The sweet rose all around
Sendeth its smell ;
But sweeter scent is found
Where Christ doth dwell.
Father, I pray
That it may be
Even so with me
From day to day.

The meek lamb, suffering sore,
Doth ne'er complain,
Like Jesus when He bore
Our sin and pain.
Father, I pray
That it may be
Even so with me
From day to day.

The lark doth gaily rise
And sweetly sing,
Up where the spirit flies
On prayerful wing.
Father, I pray
That it may be
Even so with me
From day to day.

The little birds all think,
When sorely pressed
For shelter, meat or drink,
That God knows best.

Father, I pray
That it may be
Even so with me
From day to day.

The little rills all flow
To one great sea,
As all Thy children go,
Lord, nearer Thee.

Father, I pray
That it may be
Even so with me
From day to day.

All things work out Thy will,
And give Thee praise ;
For love abideth still
In all Thy ways.

Father, I pray
That it may be
Even so with me
From day to day.

Our fathers in the sky,
Ere life was passed,
All hoped to reach on high
Sweet Home at last.

Father, I pray
That it may be
Even so with me
From day to day.

A VISION OF FINAL JUDGMENT.

God gave a new King to the wintry world,
 Gentle of heart, and Bountiful his name ;
 Dark hosts of clouds their loyal flags unfurl'd,
 And hailstorms rattled forth their fierce acclaim ;
 Wild winds arose and their allegiance told,—
 They meant warm welcome, tho' their breath was cold.

The courtly Sun looked down with watery eye,
 And the meek Moon, and gave their homage due ;
 Slow Mists, grey-mantled, kneel'd while passing by ;
 Frosts came with silent step and saintly hue ;
 Great Floods on their deep organs played the while,
 And not in vain the dull Hours tried to smile.

He was a priestly King—love filled his heart,
 And gifts both great and good were in his hand ;
 Right royally his purpose was to play his part,
 So spake he thus to all in every land :
 "Honours I seek not, save in your behests,—
 'Tis mine to serve, 'tis yours to be my guests."

Ah ! then he was besieged by selfish cries ;
 By pleading mouths already filled with greed ;
 By deadly hopes that glared in hungry eyes :
 By souls who knew their lust but not their need,—
 Fond souls who craved the foulest for their good,
 And weary hearts that swelled in prideful mood.

Some came in wine and clamour'd loud for more ;
Some were exceeding rich and cried for gold ;
Some shriek'd for Pleasure from her gilded door ;
For Pity some, as wolves do in the fold :
"Freedom!" they cried who kept their brethren slaves ;
And "Honour! honour!" who were branded knaves.

Lo! faintly seen outside the surging crowd,
In silence stood a meek man, pale and thin,—
Him did the King espy, and thus aloud,
With firm and friendly voice: "Come in, come in!
Back, back, ye brawlers!" Then with drooping eye,
With slow and faltering step the man drew nigh.

"What wouldest thou, my friend, most welcome guest?"
Enquired the Royal Priest in accents mild.
"Thy will, not mine," he said, "Thou knowest best ;
Let me be loved and treated as a child,—
Only if good befall me, this I pray :
Good let it be that I can give away."

Then from his seat the Priest, descending, said :
"I give thee this ; I give thee but thine own.
He placed his crown upon the meek man's head,
And led him, dumb with wonder, to the Throne,
'Mid angel songs and trumpet blasts of fame ;
This done, he smiled, and vanished whence he came.

EPHPHATHA.

Oh ! Realm of Life remote, where Silence reigns
 Mute as the dead are in their lonesome halls ;
 Where lowing herds are heard not in the plains,
 And on the hills are voiceless waterfalls !

No song salutes the Morning at her gates
 From soaring lark or linnet in the vale ;
 On drowsy Noon no droning creature waits,—
 Eve has no thrush and Night no nightingale.

The sea is heard, the thunder-riven sky,
 The groaning forest when the tempest swells,
 As in a dream one hears an angel sigh,
 Or hears the tinkling of the heather bells.

Ye favour'd ones ! well nursed on Fortune's knees,
 Who know Love's voice and grasp her jewell'd hand,
 Your unblest'd brothers—oh ! remember these
 In the lone chambers of the Silent Land !

Sad land ! where never yet did shepherd hear
 The plaintive lamb, nor dog, nor cooing dove ;
 Nor ever yet did fall on mother's ear
 The music of her child's distress or love.

Nor fireside mirth is heard, nor sacred song
 Which pious hearts from family altar raise ;
 Nor psalm of strength ascending from the throng
 In courts of God's house on the best of days.

Lips never know the weary heart's complaint,—
Life ebbs unheard by weeping friends around,—
Soft as the soul-step of departing saint
His orphans' cries—all innocent of sound.

The city silent, with its rushing wheels
And tread of myriads hurrying to and fro,
As when thro' haunted house a phantom steals,—
All silent as the sound of falling snow.

Is Mercy silent? Doth she there alone
Refuse fair Truth and bind her silver tongue—
Strike Pity deaf and speechless as a stone—
Forbid the Saviour's triumph to be sung?

Nay; God be praised for what His grace denies!
The boon miraculous His wisdom brings,
And Sight hath gifts of hearing in her eyes,
And with her fingers, lo! she speaks and sings!

Oh! never were so beautiful the feet
Of messenger on mountain sides of old
As when even here in tones divinely sweet
The story of Redeeming Love is told!

Unrivalled harvests spring from iron sod
Once the soft showers of heavenly blessing fall;
So let the deaf best know the voice of God,
And souls with dumb lips praise Him most of all!

THE VICTORY OF LOVE:

A LAY OF ANCIENT ISRAEL.

Like far-off storm thro' forest faintly sweeping,
 Or distant moan of ever-murmuring sea,
 I hear the wail of some sad mourner's weeping,
 Fast by the rocks of lonely Engedi.

I see the fresh day touch with rosy fingers
 The hills where gentle flocks all night have lain ;
 Perchance it is some thorn-caught lamb that lingers,
 And pours its rippling sorrow to the plain.

Their caves the bittern and the owl are keeping,
 No dove by eagle press'd there seems to be,—
 I hear the wail of some sad mourner's weeping,
 Fast by the rocks of lonely Engedi.

From yonder cave shot forth with sudden screaming
 The bittern like an arrow cleaves the sky ;
 And many a startled owl in darkness dreaming
 Opes to the hated light his drowsy eye.

From rock to rock a thousand echoes leaping
 Dash on the breast of distant hills and die,—
 I hear it swelling still, that voice of weeping,
 As tho' some fallen seraphim were passing by.

Lo ! from the cave with faltering step advancing
Among the tangled vines a tall form stands,
The joy of morn upon his helm is glancing,
His face bent low and buried in his hands.

Is he the mourner? Wounded have I found him ?
A lonely man, mail-clad ; but he is not alone,—
See, troops of grim-faced warriors rise around him,
Awed by his unused tears and grief unknown.

With noble countenance, and close beside him,
Forth from the cave a comely youth appears,
Jesse's fair son, with God to guard and guide him,
In prowess unapproached tho' young in years.

A shepherd boy—the king gave him his daughter,
And she gave love, for that no sire can give ;
Now cursed by envy and pursued by slaughter,
For Saul, the king, hath sworn “ He shall not live.”

From Salem yesterday, with trumpet sounding,
The furious king three thousand soldiers led,—
But see ! yon mourner, 'mong the host surrounding,
Like Saul among the people lifts his head ;

And stretching forth his tear-stained hands to David :
“ 'Tis thou, my son, unjustly doomed to die,—
Thee had I slain, but thou my soul hast saved—
My son ! my son ! more righteous thou than I ! ”

Oh cruel spite, thou art thyself no longer !
Changed is thy brow, thine eye that seldom sleeps,—
There is indeed in breast of kings a stronger
Than jealousy and hate,—lo ! it is Saul that weeps !

And David clasps the king, and cries, “My Father !”
And Saul with royal tears, “My son, my son !
Round thee, most gallant youth, the tribes shall gather ;
Belov’d of Israel, the Lord’s anointed one !”

Men of Gibeah ! leave your ploughs and cattle,
Ye Bethlehemites ! your flocks, and come and see,
For Saul and David have drawn near to battle
Fast by the rocks of lonely Engedi.

No bucklers clang, no hungry swords are clashing,
No soul-exciting cry the trumpet gives,
Nor that high crest is seen thro’ deep ranks dashing,
For stalwart Saul is slain—and still he lives !

The king has perished, but the man is living,
And with the king revenge and slaughter cease ;
He perished in the glance that love was giving,
And Saul and David now depart in peace.

Oh David ! this of all thy deeds was greatest,
When sword of mercy drew not blood but tears ;
All ages shall record thee to the latest,
Mightier by love than kings with swords and spears !

SONG OF THE HEBREW MAID.

1 Sam. vii.

A happy Hebrew maid,
 Roaming the forest shade,
 And soft green-mantled glade,
 The berries and the flowers I bring, I bring ;
 And as I taste the vine,
 And the pretty flowers entwine,
 Of the dark-browed Philistine
 I sing, I sing.

One time, 'twas long ago,
 Came up the deadly foe,
 As swiftly as the roe,
 Like locusts from the desert they came, they came;
 Then every cheek was pale
 When they saw the sunny vale
 With shield, and spear, and mail
 Aflame, aflame.

We had many men of might,
 But none with armour dight,—
 No signal for the fight,
 No banner waving over them had they, had they;
 They had come with garments rent,
 Their heads with dust besprent,
 It was not war—they meant
 To pray, to pray.

Then Samuel the Seer
With hasty step drew near,
With loud voice calm and clear,
 He bade their coward faithlessness to go, to go ;
He lifted up the prayer :
“ Wilt thou, Lord, leave us bare
To Gentile swords, and spare
 The foe, the foe ! ”

To save His chosen race
Came down the God of grace,
Clouding the sky's bright face,
 His thunder-chariot rolling on the flood, the flood ;
The mountains shook with dread,
The valleys overspread
With lightning flashing red,
 Like blood, like blood.

On waters swelling high
Under the angry sky,
“ Oh Dagon ! ” was the cry
 From the shattered ranks that rose that day, that
 day ;—
As the torrents wide and deep
With restless dash and sweep
Dart headlong down the steep
 Away, away,—

So from the hills, behold !
The foemen's ranks were rolled,

When rushed our yeomen bold
 With psalm and shout of triumph from the gate,
 the gate ;
The dead lay (overthrown
With weapons of their own),
Like berries, tempest-blown,
 Of the date, the date.

The groves all mourned the dead ;
The lily hung her head ;
The white rose turned to red ;
 The dove had purple stains upon her breast, her
 breast ;
And the spoiler's roving band
Came no more with sword or brand ;—
Our homes and fatherland
 Had rest, had rest.

Ye groves ! rejoice instead ;
O lily ! lift your head ;
White rose ! no more turn red ;—
 Your snowy breast no more be stained, ye doves !
 ye doves !
Tho' great and high is He
Who hath made His people free,
Yet a little maid like me
 He loves, He loves.

THE SUNBEAM.

I.

It leapt down from the summer sky
When zephyr winds were blowing ;
It glittered in the eagle's eye,
And danced where flowers were growing.

It gave the gleaming buttercup
Its golden sheen so glossy ;
It darted down and darted up
On sweet banks green and mossy.

It flickered round by many a bower
Where bloom'd the blushing roses,—
And where the little daisy-flower
Its dewy lips discloses.

Adown the vale with prattling brook
It glistened, oh so brightly !
And danced in many a shady nook,
So modestly and lightly !

I saw it chase the icy spring
With blasts of balmy weather,
And shake the gold dust from its wing
Upon the purple heather.

There on the moor upon a stone
I sat and saw it meeting
A beauty fairer than its own,
Nor seemed one half so fleeting.

A bonnie lass came briskly by,
With mirth her lip was laden ;
The Sunbeam caught her laughing eye,—
She was a sprightly maiden.

“Ho ! ho !” he cried, “this very week
This maid and I will marry ;”
He kissed the dimple on her cheek,
“And here,” quoth he, “I’ll tarry !”

Then rose fair music far and wide
From birds of many a feather,
To greet the sunbeam and his bride,—
And off they danced together !

II.

Why, Summer, are thy transports fled ?
Why drags life on so slowly ?
The pretty woods with gloom are wed,
And I with melancholy.

The silent snows of Winter come
On yonder shepherd’s dwelling ;
And Death, while all things else are dumb,
His time-worn tale is telling.

But o’er the maid and Sunbeam dead
He tells no saddening story—
Hope with Immortal Bliss is wed,
And Grace with Heavenly Glory !

FAINTHEARTED.

" Work while it is day."

Weakness overwhelming,
 Sorrows multiply ;
 Bruisèd reed is broken ;
 Frailty fain would die.
 Life is heavy-laden,
 O that it would cease !
 Death is long in coming
 With its welcome peace.

Can it be, the Master
 Blind to our behest ?
 To His servant lending
 Neither work nor rest ?
 Hush thee, fainting spirit !
 Hear the voice Divine :
 " Work ! " the Master's watchword ;
 " Work and Wait ! " be thine !

Soon enough for dying
 When our work is done ;
 When the war is ended,
 And the battle won ;
 When the wrong is suffered,
 And the wrong forgiven,
 Time enough to languish,
 Soon enough for Heaven

Soon enough for dying
 When our strength is dead ;
 When the sick have comfort,
 And the hungry bread ;
 When the weary stranger,
 Reft of every stay,
 Coming poor and needy,
 Goes in peace away.

Soon enough for resting
 When, the daylight past,
 We have toil'd our utmost,
 And have prayed our last ;
 Then the trooping angels
 Earthward floating down,—
 Well-done !” from the Master,
 And the martyr's crown !

WISDOM FROM BELOW.

God Almighty !

There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
Would men observingly distil it out :

* * * * *

Thus may we gather honey from the weed,
And make a moral of the Devil himself.

—*King Henry V.*

And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know,
but who are ye?

—*Acts of the Apostles.*

Let thanks be given where thanks are due,—
For sun and shadow in the wood ;
Both for the false and for the true,
Both for the evil and the good.

We trust God where we cannot trace,
We see Him frown, and love Him still ;
To every other darken'd face
Is there a heart that knows no ill ?

O might we but the evil trust
For what it holds in secret hiding,—
Good not begotten of the dust,
But nobly born, of God's providing !

None like the false can venerate
The honest truth for being true ;
And still the wrong, tho' wrong be great,
Draws hope from what the right can do.

Courage, my heart ! tho' evil things
Be round thee like an ocean swelling ;
To thee no ill the evil brings,
Nor to thy happy truth-bound dwelling !

Still from the first the world hath seen
One hypocrite thrust down another ;
And the poor child of lust or spleen
Correct in truth his erring brother.

Ill hath no kingdom of its own,
No church, and no communion-table ;
A bubble is its only throne,
Its language and its home a Babel.

In secret ever doth it yield
To God the sceptre and the crown ;
Its followers in the battlefield
Can only beat each other down.

Be still ! God reigneth everywhere ;
The patient Christ still bears the Cross ;
His foes with triumph fill the air,—
'Tis they—not He—who bear the loss.

Are the vile heathen sunken low ?
They know the Gospel when they hear it ;—
No heart in sin can deeper go
Than the pure love of God can cheer it.

Man's nature like the brute may be,
An infant Christ is at the core ;
Hell may be bad, but God can see
His angel standing at the door.

Yea, Truth within that dismal realm
In quiet lifts her shining face,
A glittering honour on her helm
Which Heaven itself could not replace.

What need we fear tho' tumult rolls
And wicked men are mischief making ?
Come, patient Hope ! preserve our souls,—
We give thy hand a hearty shaking !

WAR!

War, thou art fearful, but we will not fear thee ;
 Come, if thou must, we will not say thee nay ;
 Stern god ! we need our strength when we are near thee,
 Nor need we quail e'en tho' our strength decay.

We are too proud to tremble,—weak we may be,
 Too weak to win, yet strong to yield our breath,—
 Brave hearts are bright however dark the day be,
 And never are too weak to conquer death !

We neither bless nor curse thee, dark-brow'd duty !
 Thou com'st unwelcome in thy hideous guise ;
 Yet thy grim visage hath its gleams of beauty,
 And mercy tames the fierceness of thine eyes.

Is not the gentle Christ in all our trouble ?
 And thro' our pains His mild compassions flow,
 To cheer poor Frailty when her toils redouble,
 And bring forth music from the groans of woe.

So dost thou come unbid, thou scourge of nations !
 Nor like an unblest'd sorrow comest thou ;
 Fruitful and fair thy field of desolations,
 As are the thorns that crown the Saviour's brow.

O War ! 'tis thine to make true sons of pity,
 Who know too well to love the shining brand ;—
 So let thy thunders roll o'er sea and city,
 Our only cry is—God and Fatherland !

THE FLOWERS ;
*AND WHAT THE FLOWERS BEAR
 WITNESS TO.*

I.—THE CHANGEFULNESS OF PROVIDENCE.

Vision of God, oh lovely Flowers !
 A dream of life where hope is dead ;
 Light of the old Edenic bowers
 Still flickering on the path we tread !
 Ye burst forth smilingly and gay
 As children do from cloister'd school ;
 Only a flash, and then away
 Like swallows mirror'd in the pool ;
 Only a smile ere going hence,
 Dear partners of our weal and woe !—
 How seeming harsh is Providence !
 How merciful—for being so !

II.—THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD.

Faithful, ye never fail to come ;
 The frowning heavens grow always fair ;
 The singing birds are never dumb ;
 The autumn fields are never bare.
 When trembling Noah left the Ark
 In fear lest God might fail to bless,
 He saw upon the waters dark
 The rainbow of His faithfulness ;—
 And still, in many a sparkling hue,
 Begotten of the sun and showers,
 The same old Covenant shines in you,
 Ye earthly rainbows of the Flowers !

III.—THE SPIRITUALITY OF MAN.

In open mead, or tangled wood,
In garden trim, or mossy dell,
Priests, ye provide the spirit's food,
And human souls ye nurture well ;—
Adorned, your dewy altars rise
In temple grove, or lonesome hill,—
The incense of your sacrifice
Is on the poor man's window-sill ;—
And we are sure, who, for your sake,
Treads warily the spangled sod,
From Nature's bosom ne'er can break,
Nor be a wanderer far from God.

IV.—THE FATHER'S DISCIPLINE.

Oh patient Flowers ! who bear the cross,
Who feel the knife and murmur not,
Made beautiful beneath your loss,
The trouble past, the pain forgot,
When ye approach the sufferer's bed
With healing for the tainted air,
Pale sickness lifts her drooping head,
And scents the future Eden there.
Father of all ! Thy deep design
Who of Thy flowers can understand ?
To hurt us healingly is Thine,
And bleeding Love controls Thy hand.

V.—THE CHARACTER OF JESUS.

Why did ye, Flowers, so idly lie
In shadowy glades, or desert moors,
Whilst He, your Prince, was passing by
In sweeter innocence than yours ?
Ye came not crowding to His feet,
Nor cast your rainbow round His head ;
The mocking thorns came, most unmeet,
And wondered whither ye had fled ;—
Ah no ! ye only shared His blame,—
Ye shared so well His likeness too ;
Nowhere the beauty of His name
Shines meekly as it shines in you !

VI.—THE FRAILTY OF MAN.

Breathe love, kind Sisterhood of Flowers !
On brother Man in frailty cast,
The infant of a few short hours,
And then—a little dust at last !
His struggling spirit mounts on high,
Rose-visions throng his teeming brain,
But soon like last year's leaves they lie
In Ruin's heap and Sorrow's rain ;—
Yet shall they nobly bloom at length,
And last while Heaven itself remains,
For God, who needs not creature strength,
Is honoured most where weakness reigns !

VII.—THE INCARNATION OF GOD.

'Tis even so,—in frailest reed,
Wild rose, or ruddy pimpernel,
In every unprotected weed
The Highest condescends to dwell.
But of them all was never one
So frail, forlorn, and bruised as He ;
God veiled in His Incarnate Son,
The Flower of all Humanity !
Whose wing of holy balm is spread,
His meek omnipotence laid bare,
Wherever Shame may hide her head,
Or Weakness crouch in dumb despair !

VIII.—THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

Minstrels of every shape and hue,
None ring the Resurrection bells
So worthily as ye can do,
Who in the seed's unshapely cells
Once lay within death's lonely mound,
In sure decay, in silent gloom,
But now in living splendour crowned,
Miraculous offspring of the tomb !
Fit emblems for the dying bed,
The fittest weeds to drape the bier,—
The bloom is on our Christian dead,
They were but seeds while living here.

IX.—THE SAVIOUR'S LOVE FOR CHILDREN.

The plant grows old from stage to stage,
But ye, blithe Flowers ! are always young,—
The children's friends, in every age
Ye on their jewell'd necks have hung,
In Nature's pure sweet fellowship
Where lambkin plays and brooklet runs ;—
So spake in love the Saviour's lip
Of "lilies" and of "little ones."
May we that happy kingdom seek
Where both are clustering at the door—
Where bloom is on the children's cheek,
And lilies fade not, evermore !

X.—THE FREENESS OF THE GOSPEL.

Fair Flowers ! a Gospel rich with grace,
And free for all hearts everywhere,
Like the broad heaven's impartial face,
The sunlight, or untrammell'd air ;
To you, as to the saintly stars,
There is no high or low estate,
Ye twine around the prisoner's bars
As sweetly as the gilded gate ;—
In some old baron's ruined hall
Forget-me-not is welcome guest,—
So love, the fairest flower of all,
In desolate chambers of the breast !

XI.—THE FINEST OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

Oh silent Flowers ! in calm repose
Ye ever do your noblest things ;
Your savour, when the rough wind blows,
Is wafted on unrustling wings ;
And this, in many a sick-room, lends
Fit pinions for the soul to rise
When lo ! its prison-garb it rends,
As do the ripening butterflies.
Like Mary at the Master's feet,
The better service makes no sound ;
The Christian's work when most complete
Is but a fragrance circling round.

XII.—THE WIDENESS OF GOD'S FATHERHOOD.

True Flowers ! our friends whate'er befall ;
Pledge of a Universal Good,
Who in His love enfoldeth all
With arms of wondrous Fatherhood !
Nor man alone ye fain would please,
But wandering hosts of hill and plain,
Where oxen sniff the scented breeze,
And gnat-life pours, like golden rain ;—
All creatures, each to each, are bound
In servitude's unselfish ties ;
And the whole earth is girdled round
With living chains of sacrifice !

HYMN OF DEDICATION.

I.

King of Zion ! God of Grace !
With Thy Glory fill this place :
Make this house we consecrate,
House of God and Heaven's gate ;
Here in all Thy beauty dwell,
God with us, Emmanuel !

What we give is all thine own—
Heart of love, and house of stone ;
Thou didst cause the work begin—
By Thy grace we enter in ;
Help, and we shall prosper well,
God with us, Emmanuel !

Grant communion when we meet ;
Solemn worship ; service sweet ;
Noble praise ; prevailing prayer ;
Gospel truth and joy to share
More than we can ask or tell,
God with us, Emmanuel !

Bind in one both great and small,
Rich and poor, and bless them all ;
Then let each, the blessing found,
Bear it hence, and spread it round,
Till Thy name all know full well,
God with us, Emmanuel !

Spare the lambs within our fold ;
Strengthen youth, and cheer the old ;
Every soul to new life raise ;
Every mouth fill with Thy praise ;
Let Thy love each bosom swell,
God with us, Emmanuel !

Helper and Belov'd of all !
When our charity is small,
Weak hands wish for idle ease,
Faints our zeal on feeble knees,
Let Thine own strong love compel,
God with us, Emmanuel !

Life of all that live or die !
Hear us when too weak to cry ;
When doth fail our heavenward hymn ;
When love cools, and light grows dim—
Show Thy face, and all is well,
God with us, Emmanuel !

II.

Thee we praise, by love's constraint,
Sinner's Friend, sweet Rest of saint ;
Open Way, and Truth, and Life ;
Joy of sorrow, End of strife ;
Sure Defence from death and hell,
God with us, Emmanuel !

Wonderful, Thy works and ways ;
Counsellor, beyond all praise ;
Father's Love that ne'er shall cease ;
Mighty God, and Prince of Peace ;
Conqueror, whom none can quell,
God with us, Emmanuel !

Root of David ; Morning Star ;
Refuge near, and Hope afar ;
Rose with all sweet Sharon's grace ;
Lily in the lowliest place ;
Lamb of God ; Salvation's Well,
God with us, Emmanuel !

In the ages long ago
Thou did'st come, a Child of woe ;
Sharing with us sorrow's bread ;
Thorns upon Thy righteous head ;
From the Cross Thy life's blood fell,
God with us, Emmanuel !

Ours the sin, and Thine the pain ;
Thy great agony our gain ;
Guilt of sin Thou tak'st away ;
Love of sin no more will stay
When Thy Spirit breaks the spell,
God with us, Emmanuel !

Sick in body or in soul,
Thou our Health, shalt make us whole ;
Nought can harm when Thou art near ;

Future ill we need not fear ;
Ne'er in loneliness we dwell,
God with us, Emmanuel !

Death, by Thee, is dawn of light,
Change of hope for welcome sight,
Faltering faith for perfect love,
Church below for Church above—
There at home with Thee to dwell
Evermore—Emmanuel !

LUX IN TENEBRIS.

"If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me."—Psa. cxxxix. 11.

All silent lie this breast within
 Undreaded depths of secret sin;
 Dark realms of unsuspected woe,
 Mine own, yet not for me to know;
 Mine eyes are mercifully blind,—
 Thank God! my guilt is hard to find!
 Unseen, All-seeing, Thou art there
 Alone to witness and to bear;
 To cleanse the breast, and clear the sight,
 My God, my Everlasting Light!

My secret sorrows unconfessed
 Lift up to God their dumb behest;
 Never to mortal ear revealed,
 To my own spirit half-concealed;
 I bear till I can bear no more,—
 And there are sharper pangs in store
 Unseen, All-seeing, Thou art there
 Kindling Thy candle, my despair;
 Brighter than noonday shines the night,
 My God, my Everlasting Light!

Depressed, maligned, misunderstood,
 I fail to do the task I would;
 Though aimed with prayer I miss the mark,—

Struggling like Jacob in the dark ;
Life void of fruit, and filled with gloom,
More dead than the unconscious tomb :
 Unseen, All-seeing, Thou art there,
 Thy Cross my burden and my care ;
 I hear Thee groan,—then all is bright,
 My God, my Everlasting Light !

My cry for knowledge will not cease,
Yet darkness comes, and doubts increase ;
Truth to my soul bleak Winter brings
With chill blasts of her blighting wings ;
Night thickens o'er me, fold on fold,—
And blind Life staggers in the cold :
 Unseen, All-seeing, Thou art there,
 Only Thyself those clouds can wear,
 They are Thy mantle glistening white,
 My God, my Everlasting Light !

"I WILL NOT LET THEE GO."

Jesus, I cannot, will not let Thee go,
I love Thee so ;
Far less Thy love will ever suffer Thee
To part with me.

I know Thou lovest me, but cannot tell
How long, how well ;
And all the love that fills this heart of mine
Is drawn from Thine.

I feel no sorrow, and I fear no fear
When Thou art near ;
And all my sinful feelings droop and die
Beneath Thine eye.

O let my weary head sink down to rest
 Upon Thy breast ;
 And let me drink in flowing words my fill
 Of Thy sweet will.

Thou hast, Thy dear self, of the pain I bear
The largest share ;
My sorest agony is very bliss
When I think this.

When my weak spirit cannot rise in song,
O make me strong !
And when uneasy murmurings will not cease,
O whisper peace !

Upon Thy bosom leaning, let me there
Lose all my care ;
And gazing on Thy glory, let me be
Made like to Thee.

O love of Christ ! that I can never know,
Nor yet let go ;
With Thee all sorrow from my life is driven,
And death is Heaven.

PATIENCE.

Wae for the weary feet and sore !
 Wae for the rough road travelled o'er !
 But now the agony she bore
 Is overpast,
 And she hath gained for evermore
 God's rest at last !

O Patience ! in the golden street
 Where throngs of men and angels meet,
 Hark ! how a thousand praises greet
 Thy meek pale face,
 Once thou hast run, with bleeding feet,
 The saintly race.

Long waiting, suffering to the end,
 Trusting the sorrow He could send
 Who 'neath the bitter Cross did bend—
 Wherever known,
 In footprints of the sinner's Friend
 Were placed thine own.

Thy voice in heavenly choirs He hears
 Who treasured up thy secret tears
 Thro' the long waste of sickening years,
 Thou patient one !
 Thine only murmur in His ears—
 “ Thy will be done !”

From Him great help thou had'st to crave,
And what His own heart richly gave
From thine to succour and to save

Went forth as free—

Rose Phoebe from her ancient grave
And lived in thee !

They come, the dear ones thou hast known,
Whither thy gentle heart hath flown,
In some nook nestling near the Throne

To meet again—

Brief hour of toil, a parting groan
For us, till then.

THE WILDERNESS MADE GLAD.

*"The Lord of Peace Himself give you peace always, by
all means."*

Foul, wretched, frail, deep-dyed and dreary
With sins and woes that will not cease ;
Laid in the dust, forlorn and weary,
With gropings for the God of peace !

Hush thee, my soul ! be still, expending
Thy strength in fretful sighs like these !
Peace, at the Master's hand attending,
Waits meekly till the Master please.

He bids, nor will the servant tarry—
Swift as a sunbeam cometh He ;
Nor ever sunbeam yet could carry
The soft sweet light He brings to thee.

Warm, rich, most beautiful and tender
The service of this gentle Friend !
None but His very Self can render ;
None else the servant He will send.

Even so, Lord Jesus ! come, come quickly !
Light of indwelling Peace, draw near ;
And when my lamp burns low and sickly,
Always let Thine be strong and clear.

Fresh rills of hope Thou bringest ever
From lonely wastes of pain and tears ;
They meet, they flow like God's own river,
Calm and eternal as His years !

THE MYSTERY OF MYSTERIES.

" Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself."

" Yea, our God is merciful."

How darkly God hides from our sight
 In the sorrow that round us lies,
 In the terrors of day and night,
 In the ruin of earth and skies,—
 In the whirlwind's wild career,
 In the blast of the blinding sleet,
 When His tread brings the earthquake near,
 And "clouds are the dust of His feet!"

Oh, where can His tenderness be
 When the thunderbolt fire He flings,
 In the hungry roar of the sea,
 In the hurricane's fateful wings,
 In the famine that stalks with death,
 In the flood o'er the weltering plain,
 When the pestilence breathes his breath,
 And war finds his feast of the slain!

Dark, dark is the covering veil,
 But behind it the Bleeding Heart,
 Whence the mercies that never fail,
 For His is the Sufferer's part ;—

There is kindness that cannot harm,
There is sympathy pure and wide
In the stroke of the nail-pierced arm,
In the feet of the Crucified !

His strength is the strength of His love,
And His love is in all around,
In the orbs that glitter above,
And sparrow that falls to the ground ;
Let Him bring the worst of His ill
To His creatures the great or small,—
For the roughest of God's good-will
Is the tenderest way for all !

MISERERE !

Dark was the night and cold,
 And in the silent street
 The weary traveller, thin and old,
 Wandered with naked feet.

Panting at my closed door,
 Most pitiful to see,
 "Mercy !" he muttered o'er and o'er,
 "Have mercy upon me !"

"O wretched man and worn,
 Whence comest thou ?" said I.
 "In Bethlehem city was I born
 Two thousand years gone by."

"Nay, sooth, that cannot be ;
 But who art thou ?" I cried.
 "I am the lost soul," muttered he,
 "For whom the Saviour died."

The vision of despair
 Thus spoke and ceased,—to be
 Only a quivering in the air,
 "Have mercy upon me !"

An agonising plaint
 As from a storm-vext tree,—
 A moaning like a dying saint,
 "Have mercy on me !"

A shade more dark than night
 Wailing and hurrying on ;
One moment it appalled my sight,
 And in the next was gone.

Fierce grew the gathering storm
 As I made fast my door ;—
Oh, whose may be that voice, that form ?
 They haunt me evermore !

Saviour ! is this Thy moan ?
 And cravest Thou from me
The mercy that is all Thine own ?
 Oh ! have I none for Thee ?

NIGHTFALL.

It is my happiness in life
 God's purpose to fulfil ;
 My happiness in death to die
 According to His will.

If He should give me painless death,
 With thankful heart I take ;
 If agony, then I shall try
 To suffer for His sake.

I know it is my heart's desire
 To die in my own bed ;
 But God, where'er I fall asleep,
 Will hold my sinking head.

I fain would die with undimm'd sense,
 Clear mind, and active will ;
 But if not this, whate'er God give
 It must be better still.

If sudden death be in my lot,
 My God will order well
 For all I have not strength to do
 Or have not time to tell.

I wish not to have aught in death
 But worthlessness to plead ;
 The Saviour died not for my worth,
 But only for my need.

On the sure merits of my Lord
I firmly take my stand,
And hope in my last hours to feel
That He is close at hand.

But this I crave, whate'er my God
For me may have in store,
That life may be a journey home,
And death the entrance door

DAYBREAK.

My God Thy glory breaking on my view
 Makes all things new ;
 And lays a sweet distress of welcome kind
 On heart and mind.

I cannot tell, nor yet can I conceal
 The joy I feel,
 Whilst unto Thee in worship, Lord, I call,
 And trust my all.

I had, while thoughts of self-praise clung to me,
 Hard thoughts of Thee ;
 But now, in Thy pure light, and clad with shame,
 I mourn my blame.

Low in the depths I lay, and did not cry
 To call Thee nigh ;
 Yet Thou did'st come, and all my trouble take,
 For pity's sake.

My sin I felt not, and I could not own
 My heart of stone ;
 My soul, in deep sleep, at the gates of hell,
 Dreamt all was well.

O God of love ! and Thou didst come so low
 To save a foe ;
 And when in mercy Thou hadst set me free,
 Didst waken me.

Had I but known how dreadful was my case
In that low place,—
Not knowing Thee, I must have known despair,
And perished there.

Now Thou dost show to me the past alarms
From Thy safe arms ;
And show, in saving light which Thou hast lit,
How deep my pit.

Great God ! who succoured when I could not plead
My unknown need,—
Help me, so strong to feel, so weak to raise
My untold praise !

So poor am I to give Thee what is Thine,
Saviour Divine !
Let me but beg in silence at the door,—
I ask no more !

GRACE.

Fed from heavenly sources,
 Where God's river runs
 Down thro' myriad courses
 Of the trembling suns,

In the soft green meadow
 Grows the Flower of Grace ;
 And the yew-tree shadow
 Falls upon the place.

Odour sweet it sendeth
 On the air around ;
 And the fair head bendeth
 Towards the dewy ground.

Say, oh lonely weeper,
 In the twilight hour,
 While the dark grows deeper,
 Knowest thou this Flower,

With its breath of healing
 Breathed for human woe ;
 Fragrant peace, revealing
 More than angels know ?

Yes !—this Flower hath crowned thee,—
 Joyfully it flings
 Love's aroma round thee
 With its viewless wings !

AT THE CHURCH DOOR—ENTERING.

My God ! into Thy House I go,
 And seek that I, in tranquil fear,
 Thy Presence not far off may know—
 Nor yet too near.

Let me be shielded in Thy sight ;
 Thy shadow only let me share ;
 The fulness of the Truth's fierce light
 I could not bear.

O come, kind Spirit ! brooding Dove !
 The healing breath of mercy bring ;
 The soft sweet glow of sheltering love
 Beneath Thy wing.

I am all weakness, guilt, and sin ;
 No word of worthiness have I ;
 In pity, Lord, O bring me in,
 And hear my cry !

Old Jacob saw Thee wrapt in gloom ;
 Thy voice was heard on Sinai's hill—
 Here speak, as in the Upper-room,
 Thy " Peace, be still !"

My God ! into Thy House I go,
 And seek that I, in tranquil fear,
 In love, and solemn joy, may know
 That Thou art here !

AT THE CHURCH DOOR—LEAVING.

I thank Thee for this hour of rest,
 Spent in the quiet courts of grace :
 Lord, lead me as Thou knowest best,
 And everywhere be Thou my guest
 Within the heart's most holy place.

The path untrod Thou knowest all,
 The task untried, the secret snare,
 The sudden stroke that may befall,
 The need that dare not on Thee call,
 The stony heart of dumb despair ;—

In things approved or things amiss ;
 In hopes beneath the sod that lie,
 Or rise on glistening wings of bliss,—
 Let my poor life shew only this—
 How saints can live and heroes die.

I may not tread these courts again ;
 But I would serve Thee—see Thee dwell
 In sad and suffering souls of men,—
 Come death, it is but blending then
 Heaven's welcome with the world's farewell !

AT THE THRESHOLD.

When heart and flesh are failing,
 O Lord, I look to Thee ;
 Let Thy grace, all-prevailing,
 Revive and comfort me.
 This sad world all so dreary
 No resting can supply ;
 Thrice welcome to the weary
 It is in Christ to die.

O happy, happy landing,
 Safe on the other shore,
 Where white-robed friends are standing
 Around my Father's door,
 With ready and sweet greeting
 To grace my raptured eyes,
 All on the threshold meeting
 Of long lost Paradise.

O tender ties that bind me
 To this drear earth of woe !
 O friends I leave behind me
 To follow where I go !
 Kind Jesus, all-forgiving,
 Calls me in tender love,
 Not to the dead, but living,
 In His bright home above.

Even so, come, precious Jesus,
Sweet Promiser of rest !
Thy goodwill may well please us
That works all for the best.
It is brief time for sorrow
To you, dear friends, who stay ;
For ye go home to-morrow,
And I go home to-day.

AT THE COMMUNION.

If any guest this banquet-hall within
 Hath broken bread in unbelief and sin,
 And to his lips the sacramental wine
 Lifted, with alien heart, and love—not Thine ;—
 Kind Lord, forgive ; nor let him leave this place
 Unborn, unblest'd of Thy redeeming grace.

If any, worn with penitential fears,
 Once more at this glad feast have sown in tears,
 Mourning the path his wayward feet have trod,
 Mourning an angry or an absent God ;—
 Now may he find the balm for his distress
 In Thee, our Peace, our blood-bought Righteousness.

If in some breast pent up the secret groan
 Grieve over sins and sorrows not his own ;
 Bewail some wanderer from Mercy's door,
 Some loved one, loved in vain, yet loved the more ;—
 Oh teach the faithful, in his agony,
 How sweet it is to suffer, Lord, with Thee !

If now the weary heart can soar and sing,
 As tho' with linnet's voice and eagle's wing ;
 And Joy's fair children, fearless of control,
 Roam thro' the sun-lit chambers of the soul ;—
 See Thou, O Christ ! tho' cares of life increase,
 The spirit droop not, nor the music cease !

And if to some, life's journey well-nigh past,
This feast in earthly tent shall be the last ;
While strangers come to fill their vacant place,
And oh ! how soon forgot the vanished face !—
Grant them, dear Lord, to meet, lost friend with friend,
Where true love-feasts begin, but never end !

PROPHECY.

He can the Future things foretell
 Who scans the Present well ;
 Nor is the mystery of Good
 Hard to be understood ;
 No good thing, let the heart be pure,
 Is lost or insecure ;
 Weak never is the simple mind,
 Nor can its eye be blind ;
 Be thou content but to obey
 In meekest humblest way,
 The bliss, from heavenly fountains pour'd,
 Comes of its own accord ;—
 The Power, all other powers above,
 Is simple silent Love ;
 Its own it never lauds nor seeks,
 Nor of itself it speaks—
 Yet, to the lowliest soul when sent,
 More than omnipotent ;
 The Unseen opens to its view,
 The Past and Future too.

TRANSFIGURED.

Weary and fever-worn a youth was lying
 On his vain couch, thence never more to rise ;
 Yet there not he but Death itself was dying,—
 The light of life was hastening to his eyes ;
 And eager angels stood with half-spread wings,
 Their harps in hand, their fingers on the strings.

He was a gifted youth, and Hope was wreathing,
 With many smiles, rich honours for his brow ;
 But faint and fainter grew her loved one's breathing,
 And these from her fair hands were dropping now,
 Like bloom which gentle Spring most fain would hold,
 Reft by some sudden blast of Winter's cold.

Far distant was his home, where sat his mother
 Silent, and hardly knew that she was there ;
 His soul and hers changed places with each other,—
 In thought he laid his hand upon her hair,
 And she in thought was kneeling where he lay,
 Cooling his fevered temples night and day.

Yet was he there as lovingly attended
 As ever was the infant at the breast,—
 Full hands and tender hearts were sweetly blended
 With skill, for he was no mere welcome guest,
 But watch'd and fondly cherish'd like a son,
 When Love has one to lose, and only one.

The foe, alas ! was pitiless, and stronger
Than all that Love sought vainly to impart ;
And now the warfare youth could wage no longer
Was fought more fiercely in the father's heart,
Who came in bleak bewilderment and fear
To stand beside the sufferer's bed—or bier :

As one doth stand whose ravish'd eyes are holden
When falls in thousand fragments at his feet
Some legendary vase, enwreathed and olden,
With spoils of unremembered art replete,
With forms of gods and men so deftly graced
As nevermore, once lost, might be replaced.

And as he gazed on life's young tide receding,
The languid eyes met his with mystic spell,
With some deep soul of utterance in their pleading
The still wan lips had tried but failed to tell ;
Did it concern his last long resting-place ?—
No change brought beaming answer from the face.

Or might it be some message for his mother ?—
Oh ! ne'er did lightning break its gloomy bars
More swift than darkling Death sent forth this other
From eyes made lustrous from beyond the stars,—
Ethereal eloquence no tongue could reach ;—
God said, Let there be light ! and light was speech.

*Was it his wish that she might cease repining,
And of his peaceful rest in Jesus know ?—*

Then did Shekinah with its holy shining
 Burst from his face with beatific glow,—
One gleam, no more,—Elijah's chariot-flame
Wafting the spirit homeward whence it came.

O God ! forgive us for our thankless grieving
 When Thou dost walk the vale in robes of light ;
And we behold our loved ones there achieving
 The crown victorious faith bequeaths to sight,—
Children of earth no more but of the skies,
It is not they but Death itself that dies !

And in their speech will our sad words be spoken
 Where heavenly Love finds light her only tongue ;
Where life's bright promise never can be broken,
 And God is God, and Youth is ever young,
And Hope can only die in meek despair
To find herself so blissful and so fair !

PRESENT NEEDS AND PATRIARCHAL MEMORIES.

“The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers,
hath gloried His Son Jesus.”—*Acts iii. 13.*

Life one long unrest,
By trouble overpress'd ;
Rugged path, and lurking danger,
To the lone unfriended stranger,—
God of Abraham ! see
My panting misery !

Love I can but trace
In her averted face,—
Self-rejected, faint and fretful,
Friends deceiving or forgetful,
God of Isaac ! hear
The weakling's cry of fear !

Sin, deceitful sin,
Fouly I fall therein,
Deeper still in wallowing meanness,—
Oh ! this curse of my uncleanness,
God of Jacob ! break,—
For weeping Mercy's sake !

Saviour, still the same,
Who to our fathers came,—
Woeful men in deserts dwelling,
Yet by faith their bosoms swelling
With Messiah's praise,
In far-off future days !

Grace abounding send,
 Who art the patriarchs' Friend !
 Newly come in sweeter story,
 Gleaming bright in Gospel glory,
 God Incarnate now,
 The lowly Jesus Thou !

Let me know Thee well,
 Brother Emmanuel !
 Loving-eyed, and gently breathing,
 Meekly on my brows enwreathing,
 Tranquil hour by hour,
 Snow-white Redemption's flower.

Let me know Thy Cross
 Nor mourn the pain and loss ;
 Bruis'd like Thee, my Friend, my Fellow,
 Mine Thy fruitage rich and mellow,
 In communion wine,
 Blood of the Living Vine !

My reward but this—
 One drop of Thy pure bliss,
 Blessing me to bless another,
 Some far-strayed and fainting brother ;--
 Then, before Thy face,
 The humblest servant's place !

DIVINE SERVICE.

I.

THE FAMILY IN THE CHURCH.

Enclosed as in a little fold,
 Within the pew meet young and old :
 Father, with reverential grace,
 The meek-eye'd mother's tranquil face ;
 And on the children nestling near,
 With sober pride and joyous fear,
 Fresh, week by week, as heavenly dew,
 The blessing of the family pew !

They sing, they read, they pray, they wait,
 They hearken and they meditate ;
 Unstained the sacrifice and whole,
 One heart, one mouth, one mind and soul ;
 As from a harp's responsive string,
 From each the Master's fingers bring
 Pure worship in melodious tone
 And blending music all His own !

The angel of Jehovah smiled
 Long since on Hannah and her child ;
 And shed sweet beams of peace and joy
 On Mary and her mystic Boy ;

His hovering wings are guarding still
The little groups on Zion's Hill,
Who come in Wisdom's humble way
Prepared to listen and obey.

O sacred bond, with grace replete !
Home lifted to the Mercy-seat ;
With other homes united there,
Where all the common blessing share ;
These families of living stones,
Excelling far all earthly thrones,
Build up the Church of God in truth,
With mellowed age and ardent youth.

Long after will the memory save,
When parents lie in hallowed grave ;
Where'er, in quest of daily bread,
The children's wandering steps are led ;
When griefs becloud and hopes decline,
The memory in their souls will shine,—
Will come again, like healing dew,
The blessing of the family pew.

II

THE CHURCH IN THE FAMILY.

The Sabbath hour at close of day
When sweat of sin is washed away ;
And at the fireside-altar wait,
With weary frame and soul sedate,

The sire unharnessed from the strife,
Proud mother and the patient wife ;
The quiet children gathering round,
While heart-bells chime the solemn sound.

The father-priest lifts up his voice ;
In choral strains they all rejoice ;
He reads the sacred page, and now
Before the spotless Throne they bow ;
Step after step their souls ascend
Up to the ladder's Heavenward end,
Where visions of the angels be,
Ev'n for the infant on the knee !

Oft as the family board is spread,
Thankful they eat communion bread ;
And when in playful mood combine,
It is their Lord's communion wine ;
Not unprepared for weal or woe,
Forth at the call of morn they go,
Well-mantled with Shekinah's rays,
To walk the world's polluted ways.

Thus, in his grey-hair'd wisdom's prime,
Stood Joshua in the olden time
And vow'd, howe'er all else might swerve,
In heart and home his God to serve ;—
The self-same vow each day would rise
With Job's all-trembling sacrifice
For some poor child, caught unawares
In the soft web of silken snares.

· Oh ! speed the day such tie shall bind
The family of all mankind !
Assembling at the Father's feet ;
His Son the living Bread they eat ;
His own the joyous cup they drink,
Love sparkling ever at the brink ;
And striving who shall serve Him best,
Each one outrivalling the rest !

SALVATION FOR THE SAVIOUR.

I love Thee, my Deliverer !
 I reverence and adore ;
 Oh ! give me grace to help Thee,
 That I may love Thee more.

The chalice of salvation
 With rapture Thou dost fill ;
 But in Thy service find I
 A cup more blessed still.

Thou bringest wine of comfort
 To these parched lips of mine ;
 Yet am I faint with longing
 To hold that cup to Thine.

I seek Thee not on mountains
 With glory round Thy head ;
 But I would find Thee panting
 On some poor sufferer's bed.

I wish not to be mantled
 In robes of dazzling white ;
 If Thou wilt give Thy pity,
 I will not ask for light.

And still would I be groping
 In life's dark lanes below,
 To ease the Cross Thou bearest
 In all our want and woe.

So would I serve Thy weakness
 With aidance of Thine own ;
And for Thy pain bring patience
 Which Thou Thyself hast shown.

To see Thee throned in glory
 May be a blissful sight ;
To feed Thee being hungry
 Were more my soul's delight.

Oh that at last my dying
 Like Thy decease may be,
A drawing near and nearer
 To human misery !

Then would I go with gladness
 That I might come again,
Like Thee, Good Spirit, bringing
 The better boon to men.

Their sin, their pain, their sorrow
 Is all for Thee to feel ;
And so Thou need'st the healing,
 For Thou alone canst heal.

Oh service to the Saviour
 For my frail self to do,—
In life done all too feebly,—
 In death begun anew !

THE SMOKING FLAX.

I'll seek the rich man's gate no more ;
 Lo ! here I see a humble door
 Along this narrow road ;—
 I'll turn aside,—perchance it may
 Give access to a castaway
 Into a friend's abode.

I have no home, no resting here,
 No hand to help, no friend to cheer,—
 I'm weary of this world of sin ;
 O let me in ! O let me in !

Hungry, I have no bread to eat ;
 Naked to Winter's wind and sleet ;
 Sore head above, sad heart within,—
 O let me in ! O let me in !

If thou hast pity left in thee
 For a poor wastrel soul like me,
 Good watchman, if it be no sin,
 O let me in ! O let me in !

Hush, stranger ! cease thy useless prate,
 Dost thou not know King Christian's gate ?
 Think'st thou to grace, foul wretched thing !
 The marriage banquet of the King ?

O sir, I ask—and that is all—
The crumbs that from His table fall ;
Good watchman, if it be no sin,
O let me in ! O let me in !

Ah ! tremble not ; cast off thy fear,—
Meek soul, thou art thrice welcome here ;
Behold King Christian's open door
To welcome rest for evermore !

The feast awaits thee ; take thy place
'Neath the bright shining of His face ;
He knows the sorrows thou hast had,
And His long-waiting heart is glad !

LOVE'S ONLY CHOICE.

All good things to Love belong ;
 She alone is wise and strong ;
 She alone can play her part
 With a free and joyous heart ;—
 Yet is this her constant cry—
 Let me suffer, or I die !

Happiest of living things ;
 Hers the sweetest voice that sings ;
 Hers the burdened soul's release ;
 And her face is perfect peace ;—
 Yet is this her constant cry—
 Let me suffer, or I die !

Love's fair eyes are always wet
 For the grief she fain would get ;
 And of all the pain we bear
 Coveting the largest share,
 Still is this her constant cry—
 Let me suffer, or I die !

Wearisome the road and rough,
 Thou hast borne it long enough ;
 Here are all fit things to please,
 Verdant banks of balmy ease,—
 Speaks the Tempter ;—Love's reply—
 Let me suffer, or I die !

Thine the need, and thine the power,
Save thee from this fatal hour,—
Cast away the thorny crown,
From the bitter cross come down ;—
Jesus did not,—nor can I—
Let me suffer, or I die !

As the self-denying seed
Springs thro' death to life indeed ;
So beneath the sin and shame
Springeth Love's immortal fame ;—
God is Love,—Love can but cry—
Let me suffer, or I die !

Help us, O Thou Love Divine !
Till the realm of wrath be Thine,
Till the latest tear be shed,
Suffering itself be dead,—
Still with Thee to raise the cry—
Let me suffer, or I die !

ALLELUIA.

If Thy bruised hand but lead me,
 Pleased am I to stand or fall ;
 Sorrow's bread, if Thou dost feed me,
 Is the sweetest bread of all.

Give the cross, and I will bear it,
 Only shamed to lose my hold ;
 Give the crown, and I will wear it,
 Prouder of the thorns than gold.

Better far than all Thou givest
 From Thy love's unbounded store—
 Thou art mine, who ever livest,
 Mine, and mine for evermore !

Thy compassions then are kindest
 When my love is leaving Thee ;
 And my preciousness Thou findest
 When my worth has ceased to be.

Could I as the star rejoices
 Million-fold on heaven's bright floor,—
 Could I with as many voices
 As the sand on every shore,—

Could I with the joy that wingeth
 On the morn's unresting beams,—
 Or the music Nature bringeth
 From her lyres, the woods and streams,—

Could I blend those notes of wonder
Which the lark uplifts on high,
With the deep, broad-breasted thunder
Of the ocean and the sky,—

With the songs of lonely mountains
Awful in their mystic strains,—
With the clouds, those lyric fountains
Of the dew-drops and the rains,—

Each and all had I to praise Thee,
Vain would be the sacrifice ;
For the silent Cross displays Thee,
And in shame the anthem dies.

Praises all have there their ending,
Stricken dumb and turned to stone,
Till Thy shining steps ascending
Tread the pathway to the Throne.

Then, with happier notes and clearer,
Risen from the dead as well,
Alleluia stronger, dearer,
For the love it fails to tell !

A LYRIC OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

"Take My Yoke."

Hark ! weary souls, beneath the thrall
 Of sin and sorrow bending,
 Around you rings the trumpet-call
 The Lord of Love is sending,
 With jubilant freedom for you all,
 And never-ending.

The iron gateways bursting thro',
 In cadent sweetness calling,
 The silver music summons you
 From fetters vile and galling,
 As gently as the healing dew
 On mown grass falling.

Ye weary, come to Me, He cries,
 Ye hearts in anguish breaking !
 When in the dust your courage lies,
 And hope's last gleam forsaking,—
 And Friendship with averted eyes
 Farewell is taking.

Trust ye My kindly yoke, it will
 From mortal woes relieve you ;

The hope of Heavenly peace fulfil ;
Nor fret tho' it should grieve you
In love that can be faithful still,
But not deceive you.

Fear not affliction's fiery cross,
My humble spirit shewing ;
The flames redeem you from the dross,
With My compassions glowing ;
A Heavenly gain from earthly loss
For ever flowing.

THE SECRET OF STRENGTH.

Almighty Power ! whose meekness most we fear ;
 Omnipotent to suffer and endure ;
 Whose sceptred strength is strong for being pure ;
 Stronger than we to shed the human tear,
 To pour forth helpless plaints that none can hear,
 To feel the wound of wounds than none can cure ;
 Thou weakest Weakling, Poorest of the poor ;
 Power of all power, whom Heaven of heavens revere,—
 Thy lowly Name in Jesus breathing sweet
 Like fragrance from the broken casket spread,
 Or some frail weed when crushed by brutal feet,—
 Oh, let Thy timely unction bless our head,
 And cleanse us from the servile dread of Thee,
 For we ourselves, Thou Blameless One ! would blame-
 less be !

A LADY'S ADDRESS.

She spoke, and the whole ample space
With melody was filled ;
Light from her own touched every face,
And every heart was thrilled ;—
She seemed the very Gospel, come
In human form and fair ;
All other sound was stricken dumb,
And turned to silent prayer.

She pled the missionary's grief,
When comes the mournful day
His children needs must seek relief
In strange homes far away ;
Would that the little ones were taught
And nurtured by the best,
With influence, near as might be, brought
Fresh from the mother's breast !

No flower could lift its dewy eye
To greet the rising moon
More plaintively than God drew nigh
On that dim afternoon ;
His love was radiant in her face,
His music in her tone,
Her manner mellowed by His grace,
Her utterance all His own.

O Womanhood ! unseal thy lips—
God's mysteries are revealed ;
Sin's cancer touch with finger-tips—
Its hidden roots must yield ;
Angelic minstrelsies attend
Thy steps, where duty calls ;
Long-lasting sorrows reach their end
Where'er thy shadow falls.

She spoke ; and evermore she speaks
With liquid voice and low ;
Fond Memory, with flushing cheeks,
Will never let it go ;—
Amid the wildest of the storm
That music will not cease ;
And like a mantle round her form
The melody of peace !





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